





19466/8 37  
CURTIS, J.

EX BIBLIOTHECA



CAR. I. TABORIS.



60700

AN  
AUTHENTIC AND FAITHFUL HISTORY  
OF THE  
MYSTERIOUS MURDER  
OF  
**MARIA MARTEN,**  
WITH  
A FULL DEVELOPMENT OF ALL THE EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH  
LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF HER BODY IN  
**The Red Barn;**  
TO WHICH IS ADDED, THE  
**TRIAL OF WILLIAM CORDER,**  
TAKEN AT LARGE IN SHORT HAND SPECIALLY FOR THIS WORK,  
WITH  
AN ACCOUNT OF HIS EXECUTION, DISSECTION, &c.  
AND  
MANY INTERESTING PARTICULARS RELATIVE TO THE VILLAGE OF  
POLSTEAD AND ITS VICINITY;  
THE PRISON CORRESPONDENCE OF CORDER,  
AND  
**FIFTY-THREE LETTERS, IN ANSWER TO HIS  
ADVERTISEMENT FOR A WIFE.**

---

THE WHOLE COMPILED AND ARRANGED WITH UPWARDS OF THREE HUNDRED  
EXPLANATORY NOTES,

By J. CURTIS,

AND EMBELLISHED WITH MANY HIGHLY INTERESTING ENGRAVINGS.

---

"A pick-axe and a spade, a spade;  
Oh! for a shrouding sheet,

A pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet."—*Shakspeare.*

"All shudder'd at the black account,  
And scarce believed the vast amount."—*Cotton.*

---

LONDON:  
PUBLISHED BY THOMAS KELLY, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

MDCCCXXVIII.



THE HISTORY OF THE  
WARRIOR AND HIS  
WIFE

IN A LETTER

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LANCET

BY

WILLIAM GORDON



THE HISTORY OF HIS

WARRIOR AND HIS

WIFE

BY

WILLIAM GORDON

THE HISTORY OF HIS

WARRIOR AND HIS

WIFE

BY

WILLIAM GORDON

THE HISTORY OF HIS

WARRIOR AND HIS



## PREFACE.

---

To detail the crime and character of a man who has deliberately imbrued his hands in the blood of a fellow-creature, is no pleasing task to the historical narrator; and the only pleasure which he can find in the detail is, that, by unfolding a scene of guilt at once terrible and repulsive, he may anticipate that a valuable service will be rendered to the community by exciting an abhorrence of crimes so repugnant to Nature, and thereby restrain the evil dispositions of man.

Horrible and appalling as "the History of the Polstead Murder" may be, the detail is upon the whole a correct narration, and the publisher hopes that the wide circulation which it has already obtained will have the effect of arresting the hand of cruelty and crime, and moreover tend to amend the heart and improve the morals of youth in particular, by exhibiting to their view the awful consequences of giving way to unbridled passions and sensuality.

It is not unlikely but that this volume may fall into the hands of some who will hesitate whether or not to give it a perusal; but in many instances such hesitation may arise from an innate distaste to reading generally, and in others, that they do not like to peruse "a tale of horrific mystery." Neither of these classes must read the History of the Polstead Murder.

There are, however, those who are fond of a work of this description, provided that it be founded upon facts; and they will permit the compiler of it to



introduce illustrative matter which, at first view, may appear irrelevant to the general design, without his incurring their censure.

The volume now introduced to the world has been the result of very considerable labour ; and, in order that it might not only meet with the public approbation in the first instance, exertions of no ordinary kind have been made to render it a work of general information—and the compiler has travelled now and then into the land of *digression*, in order to bring home stores for that purpose. When the mysterious murder of Maria Marten was discovered in April last, the “ deed of dreadful note ” was echoed throughout the land ; and it appeared so much like a romance, that it was but little regarded by thousands, and many were wont to say that a vile hoax had been imposed upon the press : the enormity of the crime alleged to have been committed even caused the most credulous to hesitate.

It has been the endeavour of the compiler of this history to detect fallacy, to rectify errors, to ascertain truth—and, moreover, to establish the authenticity of what he has adopted for insertion, either from evidence given under the solemn sanction of an oath, unquestionable *viva voce* testimony, or a multiplicity of epistolary correspondence, transmitted by persons of known respectability. By means and exertions like these it is that multifarious subjects are introduced, which will not fail to be amusing to the general reader, and some of them may not be deemed unimportant by persons of scientific research.

The Polstead Catastrophe, or the Mysterious Murder of Maria Marten, may (to pursue alliteration) be called “ a Medley,”—for such it is—as it



exhibits the ferocity of man—the frailty and fidelity of woman—the ruin of families—the municipal authority—the power of conscience—the palladium of British liberty—the blessings of a court of judicature, under the jurisprudence of a humane judge—and, finally, that the “glorious laws, those brightest pearls which gem our monarch’s crown,” are not to be violated and the violator go unpunished; that “he that sheddeth the blood of a fellow-creature (wilfully), by man shall his blood be shed.”

Furthermore, herein will be found mythology, necromancy, biography, topography, history, theology, phrenology, anatomy, legal ingenuity, conjugal correspondence, amatory epistles, poetry, theatrical representations, affecting anecdotes, &c. &c.

It has been as much the aim of the compiler, as it was the wish of the publisher, to render this history subservient to the promotion of religion and morality; and it is sincerely hoped that the awful lesson which it contains, will prove an inducing motive to the youthful reader to walk in the paths of virtue and rectitude, in which alone real pleasure and permanent safety are to be expected.

In order to render this work as complete and entertaining as possible, the publisher has spared neither labour nor expense; for, independent of taking a journey himself to Polstead, the compiler resided fifteen days in that village for the purpose of obtaining correct historical information preparatory to the trial of the offender; and, subsequently, a longer term at Bury, in order to give a *verbatim* account of the judicial proceedings, and all other matters connected with the life, character, and death of the wretched Corder.

With respect to the graphic illustrations, the



publisher feels bound to state that he employed an eminent artist, who took (with one exception) the portraits from life, and the views, buildings, &c. on the spot; and those who are familiar with the localities, have been pleased to approve of the efforts of his genius.

To conclude: the Compiler has to claim the indulgence of the reader, inasmuch as several literal errors, and now and then a transposition of letters, will be discovered. The only apology for these discrepancies is that, in order to satisfy the urgent demands of the public, the work was printed in great haste; and during part of the time the compiler was seventy miles from London, and therefore had no opportunity of correcting the press, or making such other alterations from the original manuscript which, upon review, might have struck him as essentially necessary. These errors will be corrected in future editions.

On his own behalf the writer begs to assure the reader that he is not one of those who consider that there is something fascinating and dignifying in the title of *Compiler* or *Author*, or would say,

“ 'Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print ;  
A book's a book—although there's nothing in't.”

If, as he hopes, the perusal should produce positive good, and negatively prevent evil, his wishes will be crowned and his efforts rewarded.



# CONTENTS.

---

	Page
PREFACE . . . . .	iii
Introduction . . . . .	xi
Discovery of the Murder through Dreams . . . . .	4
Coroner's Inquest on the Body . . . . .	9
Apprehension of William Corder, and his removal to Polstead	13
A Charge of Forgery . . . . .	18
Removal from Colchester to Polstead . . . . .	22
Adjourned Coroner's Inquest . . . . .	22
The Coroner and the Public Press . . . . .	23
Disgraceful Conduct of the Peasantry, &c. . . . .	31
Departure of the Prisoner from Polstead for Bury Gaol	34
Biographical Sketch of Maria Marten . . . . .	40
The Village of Polstead . . . . .	50
Marten's Cottage . . . . .	53
The Red Barn . . . . .	54
Funeral of Maria Marten . . . . .	61
Polstead Church . . . . .	62
Disinterment of the Body . . . . .	65
Tomb to the Memory of Maria Marten . . . . .	68
Theatrical Representations at Polstead Fair . . . . .	70
Biographical Sketch of William Corder and Family . . . . .	70
Arrival of the Judges at Bury St. Edmund's . . . . .	98
The Assize Sermon . . . . .	ib.
Sermon in the Chapel of Bury Gaol, preparatory to Trial	102
Opening of the Court for Special Business . . . . .	106
Grand Jury . . . . .	107
Commencement of the Trial, and the Confusion which prevailed at the Opening of the Court . . . . .	108
Arraignment of the Prisoner . . . . .	110
Bill of Indictment . . . . .	111
The Trial . . . . .	119
Evidence for the Prosecution . . . . .	132
Popular Excitement (Second Day's Trial) . . . . .	183
Entrance of the Judge . . . . .	185
Prisoner's Defence ( <i>verbatim</i> ) . . . . .	198



	Page
Witnesses for the Defence . . . . .	224
Charge of the Lord Chief Baron to the Jury . . . . .	228
Retiring of the Jury . . . . .	241
Demeanour of the Prisoner during the time the learned Judge was summing up the Evidence . . . . .	242
Return of the Jury into Court, and Verdict . . . . .	245
Sentence of Death . . . . .	247
Return to Gaol . . . . .	250
Interval between the Condemnation and Execution . . . . .	253
Attendant's Account . . . . .	255
Mr. Orridge's Corroboration . . . . .	257
Visit of Mrs. Corder . . . . .	258
Preparation for the Execution . . . . .	262
Warrant for Execution . . . . .	263
Divine Service preliminary to the Sermon . . . . .	265
The Condemned Sermon . . . . .	269
Mrs. Corder's last Visit . . . . .	277
Corder's last Night . . . . .	281
Confession . . . . .	283
Verbatim Copy of the Confession . . . . .	285
Morning of Execution.—Great Influx of Strangers, and State of Bury St. Edmund's . . . . .	288
Devotional Exercises at the Chapel . . . . .	290
Administration of the Sacrament . . . . .	295
Corder's last Letter to his Wife . . . . .	296
The Execution . . . . .	297
Public View of the Body . . . . .	304
Dissection of the Body . . . . .	306
Important Question . . . . .	307
Mr. Orridge's Statement . . . . .	312
Phrenological Observations . . . . .	315
Justification of the Coroner . . . . .	317
Corder and the General Post Office . . . . .	319
General Observations . . . . .	321
Corder's written Correspondence during the time he was Confined in Bury Gaol . . . . .	332
Mrs. Marten's Dream, and a Singular Coincidence . . . . .	364



	Page
The Town of Bury . . . . .	369
Bury Gaol . . . . .	372
A Brief Historical Account of several extraordinary Murders committed in the County of Suffolk . . . . .	377
Theological Notices of the Fate of Corder . . . . .	380
Sermon, &c. . . . .	382
The Rev. Mr. C. Hyatt's Discourse near the Red Barn . . . . .	394
Dr. Spurzheim's Report . . . . .	397
Matrimonial Correspondence . . . . .	399
Hints to the Ladies . . . . .	402
Letters sent by various Ladies, in answer to Corder's Matrimonial Advertisement . . . . .	404
Singular Coincidence . . . . .	431
Anecdotes of Corder . . . . .	434
Theatrical Notices of the Fate of Corder . . . . .	436
A Desultory Discussion on Public Executions . . . . .	445
Legal Prolixities . . . . .	449
A Brief Sketch of the Life and Misfortunes of Mrs. Corder . . . . .	452
Mrs. Corder the Elder . . . . .	460
Corder's Transgression a prolific source of Evil to Others . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Montgomery's Poems . . . . .	465

### LIST OF EMBELLISHMENTS.

Portraits of Curtis and Digges . . . . .	to face Title Page.
———— Corder, Maria, and Child . . . . .	40
View of the Village of Polstead . . . . .	50
———— Marten's Cottage . . . . .	53
———— Red Barn . . . . .	54
———— Polstead Church, &c. . . . .	62
Portrait of Corder (full length) . . . . .	71
———— Thomas and Ann Marten . . . . .	141
———— Chaplin and Lea . . . . .	162
———— Mr. Orridge and the Rev. Mr. Stocking . . . . .	265
Execution Scene . . . . .	297
Front of Bury Gaol . . . . .	372



*Now Publishing,*

Printed uniformly with this Work, in One Volume, 8vo., or in  
Twenty-two Numbers, price 6*d.* each,

AN AUTHENTIC AND FAITHFUL HISTORY

OF THE

MURDER OF WILLIAM WEARE,

with a full Disclosure of all the extraordinary Circumstances  
connected therewith ; and

THE TRIAL AT LARGE

OF JOHN THURTELL, JOSEPH HUNT, AND WILLIAM  
PROBERT, THE MURDERERS :

Taken in Short-hand by a Gentleman specially retained for this  
Edition. To which is added,

THE GAMBLERS' SCOURGE ;

or, a complete Exposé of the whole System of Gambling in the  
Metropolis.

---

“——— Shame, beggary, and imprisonment, unpitied misery, the stings of  
conscience, and the curses of mankind, shall make life hateful to him—till at last  
his own hand end him.”—*Gamester.*

---

*Illustrated by Portraits drawn from Life, and other highly interest-  
ing Copper-plate Engravings of Plans, Views, &c*



## INTRODUCTION.

---

I cannot submit the following lucubrations without noting down a few reminiscences connected with my journey to Polstead.

I left London on St. Swithin's Day, when, in order to keep up the old legend which records her fame, she bedewed me and my fellow-passengers very plentifully with her tears; nor was she inattentive to me during my month's residence among the "South-folk," inasmuch as she daily "shed her sprinklings."

On my way from Colchester to Polstead, in the evening, when I reached the Stour, which, at Nayland, divides the counties of Essex and Suffolk, the river had overpassed its banks, so that it was impossible for pedestrians to pursue their journey. While waiting for a conveyance, I contemplated the expanse of waters which overflowed the extensive meadows, and there I beheld the hopes of the husbandman swept away by the mighty flood, on whose surface loads of new-made hay were borne down with swift rapidity, a circumstance which, at this period of the year, was novel, it being happily unfrequent. Upon inquiry, I found that, for several days preceding, the rain had been excessive, and that many humble cottagers had been deprived of that which they had fondly hoped would have supported their solitary "brindle" through the approaching winter. I was told that the damage sustained by one extensive grazier, in the vicinity of Nayland, amounted to six hundred pounds; this man, however, only lost out of his abundance, but the poor cottager lost all that he had.

On the following morning, I rose early, and walked from Nayland to Polstead; the morning was delightful, but my spirits were far from buoyant. I reflected that I was going to a place where I was an entire stranger—that I was charged with an important mission to "search after truth," and detect error, relative to a foul, sanguinary, and myste-



rious murder. I felt my incapacity, and heartily wished that I had never undertaken the journey.

Whilst leaning against a gate in this "musing mood" the rural village of Polstead was full in my view, on an eminence more than a mile distant. Both the summit, the declivity, and the spacious fields by which the village is surrounded, were studded with clumps of lofty trees, between which were here and there to be seen a cottage "blanche as mountain snow," (an indication, methought, of the industrious habits of the people among whom I am going to sojourn); and in the distance I beheld, on the summit of a gently rising hill, a beautiful and extensive villa, built of Portland stone, and in the lawn fronting the edifice, were browsing a numerous herd of deer, which, together with the surrounding scenery, presented a beautifully picturesque appearance \*. The delight was enhanced by the spire of the parish church, the vane of which attracted the rays of the morning sun, rising from amid a huge clump of evergreens, by which the sacred edifice is surrounded.

I could not help exclaiming, "Is it possible that, in the midst of this little Eden, a village swain has imbrued his hands in the blood of his damsel?" and my eye took an involuntary survey around the village, in order, if possible, to discover the *Red Barn*, of which I had heard and read so much. I saw several out-buildings, which appeared to be barns, but was unable to form a just conclusion, as no colour distinguished either of them.

"The Red Barn," I said to myself, "must be on the other side of the village." I was overheard; for scarcely had I uttered the words, than a minstrel on his way to the fair, whom I had not before observed, accosted me. "You be looking for Corder's barn, be'ant you, measter?" I replied in the affirmative. "That's it over *yon*," said he, "that's the place where they say he *did for her*. I knew

\* This mansion was Polstead Hall, the seat of Mrs. Mary Ann Cooke, a short description of which, with an eulogium upon its fair proprietor, will be found at page 51. Since my visit to Polstead, I understand that this amiable lady has "linked her destinies" with an opulent gentleman of the name of Tyrrell, living at Hadleigh.



them both—but that's neither here nor there." I more than thanked my informant, and, finding him of a loquacious turn, we trudged our way to Polstead in company.

I found my companion rather inquisitive as to what brought me down there—"They say," said he, shifting his violin from arm to arm, "Polstead fair will be very large to-day, but I doubt there will be *more cats than mice*." Not comprehending his figurative expression, I requested an explanation—"I mean" said he, "there will be more fiddlers and fifers than fees \*."

I expressed a doubt whether I could be accommodated with a bed at the Cock—my companion replied, "A bed! No, Michael Gordon at the Cock never thinks about beds at Polstead fair-time, all his rooms are employed for guzzling and jigging"—(drinking and dancing). On my arrival at the Cock, I made known my wants, briefly stated the nature of my errand, and the probable length of my stay, when the good-natured host said—"Sir, you see it's our fair, and we have only one spare bed-room, which I must use for another purpose, or I would gladly 'commodate you, *depend on't*, and I will too, after the fair's over." Prophetic fiddler, ejaculated I; when in came Baalham to take down the only bed which Polstead contains for the weary, houseless stranger †.

The fair, to use a Suffolk phrase, was very "throng" every day, and I familiarly mixed with the rustics, from whom I gathered much information upon which to ground my future inquiries; and I do not now regret, as I had done in the first instance, that I became a visitant at Polstead fair. At times I was led to be inquisitive relative to the Corders and the Martens, for the dreadful tragedy of

\* During his conversation, the man often looked wistfully at the blue bag which contained my books and linen, and I have since been led to wonder whether he suspected that I was an adventurous rival in the music line.

† I cannot omit to observe, that ere night-fall several respectable inhabitants of the village offered me accommodation, but I declined to accept it, preferring rather to sleep at Stoke during the carnival.



which the village had lately been the theatre was the principal topic of conversation. I soon found, however, that the South-folk did not like a *dry tête à tête* at fair-time; but "Gordon's Entire" obviated that difficulty, and thus I obtained "meal for the *malt*." But for these "simple annals of the poor," many interesting little incidents would not have found a place in this compilation.

During my fifteen days' residence in this village, I not only conversed with hundreds who knew the then suspected murderer from his youth up, but I also necessarily came in contact with many of his intimate acquaintances, and even some who were not distantly related to him—they knew my errand, and their ingenuousness precluded the necessity of what might have been deemed a culpable inquisitiveness, on my part, as to the previous life and pursuits of the wretched Corder. Frequently had I to pass the spacious farm-house, where his infant tongue began to lisp the endearing name of *mother*, and oft as I saw that venerable and care-worn lady, whether in her house, in the church, or in the street, (without hypocritical egotism I say it) the better feelings of my mind were aroused; and when I compared her present situation with what it was three years ago, and calculated upon the heart-rending bereavements, and overwhelming calamities which had fallen to her lot during that period, I could not refrain from shedding a sympathetic tear.

The annual revelry of Polstead fair having subsided, I took up my abode at the Cock, and such were the kind attentions of "mine host" that I found myself quite "at home." The inn is of a triangular shape, and stands on the highest ground in the village\*, of which it commands a considerable view, as well as of the beautiful church, tower, and village of Stoke, together with an extensive range of stately oaks in the distant park of Sir W. Rowley. From this spot too are to be seen the lowly cot of Thomas

\* Vide the last building but one in the engraved view of "the village of Polstead," page 50. The extreme building is the Female School of Industry, and the nearest in that direction to the Red Barn.



Marten, and the Red Barn. While standing at my chamber-window I could point on the one hand and say, "There, in yon once peaceful abode, Maria's infant prattle greeted the ears of her doting parents; there she grew in—beauty, innocence and stature,—but alas! thither the spoliator came, and nipped the tender blooming hyacinth, and for ever blasted the hopes of an aged, admiring father!"

If I turned my eyes on the other hand, I beheld the Red Barn, and what were my reflections then? "There," said I, "is the fatal building to which Corder and Maria often walked, as rural lovers are wont to walk. How oft has he not, within that building, attempted to sanctify (as he vainly thought) illicit love, by a promise of marriage, and she, infatuated girl, as oft believed the 'thrice-told tale,' and oh,—dreadful thought,—it was within the portals of that solitary building, that the pretended lover became a murderer;—and in a fatal moment, basely cut the thread of existence of his deluded victim!"

Such were my frequent reflections, when the villagers of Polstead were wrapt in midnight slumbers, and there was nothing to disturb my reverie, or divert my attention, save the beautiful warblings of the feathered songster, the distant hooting of the gloomy night-bird, and the twittering of the swallows who reposed in their clay-built nests close to my window.—These, to an ardent admirer of rural life, rather assisted than retarded meditation.

When I drew my head within the casement for the purpose of noting down my "nocturnal ruminations," or of retiring to rest, my compact and well-furnished chamber originated another train of reflection, which at first caused an involuntary sensation of horror.

The reader perhaps may be ready to say, "Ah! your midnight meditations have rendered you hypochondriacal: you imagined you beheld the apparition of the man who had so lately engaged your thoughts." I reply, No; superstition forms no part of my creed; it was a *reality* presented itself to my view. Only a few short weeks had elapsed since Corder was an inmate of the very room I then occupied—I had only to withdraw the milk-white



curtains of my bed of down, to behold the canopy which lately surmounted the head of that guilty man on the last night he ever saw his natal village. I had heard of his groanings and tossings to and fro, and in imagination I heard them re-echoed, and the chain which fastened his murderous arm to the bed-post seemed to clank in my ear.

If ever I felt the blessing of liberty, and thankful to that Great Being who, in the midst of the vicissitudes of life, had *preserved* me from "presumptuous sins," I was at this moment grateful and sincere in my adoration. "Soft balmy sleep," which was denied to him, soon closed my eyes, so that I arose in the morning and pursued my studies with increased alacrity.



THE  
*Mysteries of London*  
**Mysterious Murder**  
OF  
**M A R I A   M A R T E N,**  
AT  
**POLSTEAD, IN SUFFOLK.**

---

To detail the particulars of a transaction so unparalleled in its enormities and atrocity, involving as it does so many important considerations, is no easy task, notwithstanding the historian, like *Malebranche*, has been indefatigable in his “search after truth.” When the discovery of the horrid murder the particulars of which it becomes our duty to narrate, took place, the reports of it which were spread throughout the country, through the medium of the public press, appeared altogether of so extraordinary a nature, as to be considered unworthy of credence. We are warranted in this remark, when we have the following expression from the lips of an intelligent magistrate, (M. Wyatt, Esq.) connected with the metropolitan police:—

“*I never knew or heard of a case in my life which abounded with so many extraordinary incidents as the present. It really appears more like a romance than a tale of common life; and were it not that the circumstances were so well authenticated, it would appear absolutely incredible; it, however, verifies the remark of Lord Byron, that ‘Truth is stranger than fiction.’*”



The worthy magistrate was well justified in this remark, because it was warranted by the extraordinary discoveries which were made from time to time in rapid succession; and although, in some instances, there were exaggerations and inaccuracies sent forth to the world, yet we have discovered, by inquiries, on and near the spot where the horrid deed was perpetrated—that so far as they went, those reports were, with some exceptions, substantially correct. It will, however, appear in the course of this narrative, that one-half of the facts have not heretofore been stated. Acquainted as we are with the criminal history of our country, we found it a difficult task to find a case which was in any degree parallel with the fatal end of *Maria Marten*. In the annals of crime, we found one, however, in many respects, so analogous to it, that, in this preliminary chapter, we deem it proper to introduce it to the notice of our readers, by giving

*An Epitome of the Trial of JOHN ROBINSON, who was executed at York Castle, July 20th, 1807, for the Murder of Susannah Wilson.*

THIS malefactor was a farmer living at Mickleby in Yorkshire, and Wilson lived with him as a servant, and while in that capacity, became pregnant by him, in consequence of which she quitted his service and went to her friends at Gainsborough. On the 16th of February, in the year above-named, she left home with a view to meet Robinson, who had promised to meet her, for the purpose of rendering her some aid against her approaching *accouchement*. Just as she was setting out, she said, “A fear has come over me this morning, so that if any thing but good comes to me look to Robinson.” Some weeks having elapsed without any tidings being received of her, it was naturally



conjectured she had been murdered ; and as she went for the avowed purpose of meeting Robinson, suspicion of course fell upon him. The affair being enveloped in mystery, the country people on the following Good Friday, determined to institute a search for the body, which they at last found buried in a part of Robinson's ground, and it would appear that the finger of Providence pointed them to the spot, where, a few days before, the prisoner had himself made, under very frivolous pretences, what is called a sledge road. Under this the body was found, in a dreadfully mutilated state, the skull having been completely demolished by a blunt instrument, and there were also several incised wounds about the extremities, made by a sharp instrument. Upon opening the body, it was discovered that she had been very near the period of her expected confinement. Robinson was in consequence apprehended, and committed to York Castle, on the 2d of April, and on the 17th of July following he was put upon his trial.

*Elizabeth Green*, a relation of the deceased, proved the ominous words spoken by her on the morning she left home to meet the prisoner.

*William Terry*, the prisoner's male servant, proved that his master left home on the 16th of February, under pretence of going to Staiths to take some money, observing that he should not return till the following day. The witness also stated that, on the 21st of March, a week before the body was found, his master told him to cut some thorns while he (the prisoner) made a sledge road by filling up a ditch and cutting away a part of a hedge so as to make a communication from one pasture to another ; in the opinion of witness, there was no necessity whatever for this road. On the 27th of March, the day on which the body was found, the



prisoner said, "They have found the body of the girl where *we* made the road." Witness denied that he had assisted in the job, when the prisoner said, "You must say so, or they will say *I* have murdered the girl." In a letter subsequently written by the prisoner to this witness, he used the following remarkable expression (after instructing him what and what not to swear to at the time,) "If you can get me over that road-making, I have nothing to fear."

*William Pearson* proved that the prisoner did not come to his house until after nine o'clock on the night in question.

*James Redman* deposed to his having seen Robinson at Ellerby, within a mile of his own house, three hours after he was said to have left home.

*William Harrison*, a mole catcher, proved that the prisoner ordered him not to set his traps in the quarry—the place where the body was at first deposited. Several other witnesses having been examined, the judge summed up, and remarked upon the new road made by the prisoner, and the question was, whether he knew, when he so made it, that the body was there; he had also to account for three hours time, viz., between six and nine o'clock in the evening of the 16th of February; the dictation of a letter to his servant to swear falsely, and the expressions he had been proved to have used, were also points for the consideration of the jury, and his lordship could not for himself see how they could comport with what would flow from a guiltless mind.

The jury found the prisoner Guilty, when he uttered the most solemn asseverations of his innocence, but afterwards made a full disclosure of the murder,



and admitted that the body was at first cast into the quarry, but a deep fall of snow coming down immediately, he could not remove it until the thaw, when he conveyed it to the ditch, and covered it over with sods and bushes to make a sledge way, as had been described in the evidence adduced against him at the trial.

Such were the singular means by which this murder was discovered, verifying the words of Shakespeare, "The very stones will tell his whereabouts," and also evince the omniscience of Heaven in furnishing causes of evidence for the detection of crimes of such magnitude. Our present history will exhibit a more modern and memorable instance of an extraordinary discovery of a murder, if possible more deliberate and malignant than that to which we have adverted.

---

#### DISCOVERY OF THE MURDER THROUGH DREAMS\*.

Among the almost innumerable singular incidents with which this tale abounds, there is not one that will excite the admiration and wonder of the Christian reader more than the consideration that the Almighty was pleased to depart from his usual course of procedure in this instance in "bringing to light the hidden things of darkness," and exposing the iniquity of man. When the account

\* The only authentic case which we find upon record, in the history of Criminal Jurisprudence, where a murder was discovered, and the murderer convicted, in consequence of a dream, is that of George Caulfield, who was executed at Waterford, A.D. 1751; for the interesting particulars of which, *vide* the Newgate Calendar, vol. ii. p. 275, published by Thomas Kelly, Paternoster-row.



of what we are about to narrate, reached the public ear, it was supposed to be overcharged with fiction, insomuch that the sceptic sneered, and the Christian and the better informed, who believe that the world and all its affairs are under the inspection and control of an Almighty power, even doubted. But it is not for men to limit that power, and it is sinful in the extreme to pronounce *impossibility* upon his fiat whose wisdom lies in ways unfathomable to human perception. The ways of God are “in the whirlwind and the storm,” and he oftentimes works his will in a manner which is not only mysterious but incomprehensible. He is not only the sovereign ruler of the universe, who by his nod causes “nations and empires to rise and fall, flourish and decay,” but his goodness is equal to his power, for it extendeth to the cry of the hungry raven and the fall of a sparrow. If then the Almighty is so regardful to the *minutiæ* of creation, how much more has his wisdom, goodness, and beneficence been extended and displayed toward the human race! Who can say to him, What doest thou? and shall it be denied that he, who in his divine wisdom usually works his sovereign will by the means of human agency, is incapable of using them in such manner as to him seemeth meet?

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his works in vain,  
God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make them plain.”—COWPER.

As a beautiful illustration of the mysterious manner in which God, in his wisdom, can operate upon the faculties of man, in order that the “hidden things of darkness may be made manifest,” we refer the reader to the following passage in Holy Writ, the singular beauty and applicability of which to our subject we doubt not will be acknowledged.

“In a dream, in a vision of night, when deep sleep falleth upon



men in slumberings upon the bed ; then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction.

“That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.”—Job, chap. xxxiii. ver. 15—17.”

Several months having elapsed since Maria Marten had left her home in an extraordinary and questionable manner, and no certain tidings having been heard of her, excepting those received at first from Corder, and those being extremely vague, unsatisfactory, and often almost improbable, it was natural that her father and his family should feel considerable excitement and alarm. This alarm was, in all probability, increased from the fact of Corder having withdrawn himself from Polstead for several months. Day after day, and month after month rolled on without any intelligence being received, which was deemed the more extraordinary as she could write a good hand and was known to have a great respect for her father, her little boy, and, indeed, her whole family.

Toward Christmas, the Marten family became exceedingly alarmed, in consequence of the absence of Corder, and their ascertaining that he had given them false representations respecting her. He always said, in answer to inquiries, that she was well and happy, and, on one occasion, he said, that Maria was living for a short time with a Miss Rowland, near Yarmouth, which, upon after inquiry, turned out to be a most barefaced falsehood. The poor old afflicted father, half sceptical, and half believing statements so plausibly made, said, Why does she not write to us? Sometimes he deliberately replied, that her right hand was lame, which rendered her incapable of doing so, and sometimes he made other excuses equally vague.

It appears that Corder always had a subterfuge whenever a close question was put; for, on his being asked the necessity of Maria's going to Yarmouth at all, immediately after she left home on



the 18th of May, he replied deliberately, that it was his intention to have been married the next day, but that he discovered that the license he had provided was imperfect, and must, therefore, of necessity go to London to be signed, which would delay the nuptials for three weeks. After this term had expired, he always held out to Marten that he had married his daughter.

The mysterious absence of Maria having continued for about ten months, and Corder himself having also been absent for the better part of the time, she became the constant theme of conversation in the circle of her little family: the manner of her departure, and the Red Barn, and all the circumstances, were reviewed, and the more they were, so the more mysterious they appeared. At length, Mrs. Marten, the stepmother of Maria, said to her husband, "I think, were I in your place, I would go and examine the Red Barn." He inquired the reason why this suggestion was held out by her. To which she replied—"I have very frequently dreamed about Maria, and twice before Christmas, I dreamed that Maria was murdered, and buried in the Red Barn." "Why," said the husband, "did you not tell me this before?" Mrs. Marten replied, "that she did not like, because she thought he would consider her superstitious." After this disclosure, no steps were taken for a considerable time, as her husband did not appear to attach much importance to the disclosure she had made; but, having made it, she frequently importuned him, and at length he went with a person of the name of Bowtell, and a search was commenced. Having removed the litter from the floor of the lair, they thought that one part of the earth did not appear so solid as the rest; and, upon examination, they found that the earth was loose and capable of being removed with comparative ease. After removing the surface to the depth of about a foot and a half, they discovered some-



thing like a human body wrapped in a sack, and a green silk handkerchief protruded through the sack, which the putridity of the corpse had completely rotted in that part\*. The green silk handkerchief belonged to Corder, and was that in which Maria left her father's house.

This discovery having been made, Marten returned home without opening the grave any further, and the first inquiry was as to what kind of handkerchief Maria wore round her neck on the day she left home. The reply was—"a green one:" the poor old man then observed that, if that was so, poor Maria was murdered, and the dream which his wife had dreamed flashed across his mind in dread reality.

As we shall have occasion to advert to the Red Barn, and the grave of Maria, we shall make no further observations on the discovery of this atrocious and mysterious murder at present; but we cannot help exclaiming, that the finger of God was here! and that, by a plan to be devised only by His skill which never fails, was brought to light a "deed most foul, strange, and unnatural!"

---

#### CORONER'S INQUEST ON THE BODY.

In consequence of the body having been discovered under circumstances which left no room to doubt but that a foul murder had been committed, information of the fact was immediately despatched to JOHN WAYMAN, Esq. Coroner for the Liberty. He immediately set off from his residence at Bury,

\* It would seem that the murderer had put his victim into the sack head foremost; and it must have been done immediately after her death, in all probability, and while the body was yet flexible.



and on his arrival at Polstead issued his precept, in consequence of which a jury was summoned on Sunday, who having viewed the body, as it lay in the barn, and which, from its decomposed state, presented a most dreadful spectacle, the inquest then proceeded to the Cock public-house, for the purpose of inquiring into the cause of her death.

The first witness called was

*Ann Marten.* I am sister to the deceased, and know the body found to be hers, not only because she had a tooth missing, but by her hair. I know the earring, comb, clothes, shoes, and Leghorn hat to have been hers. I have not seen my sister since the 18th of last May, when William Corder came to our house to fetch her away; he went out at the front, and Maria at the back door, between twelve and one in the day. My sister was dressed in a man's coat, waistcoat, trowsers, and hat. Corder carried her clothes in a bag, and said he was going to Ipswich to be married the next day, but he wished to keep it a secret from his friends: after they went out at separate doors they joined. Corder came back on the Sunday following, and said they could not be married for three weeks, as the license must go to London, but added, that Maria was gone to Yarmouth to Miss Rowland's, the sister of a school-fellow of his, and was very comfortable. Corder had a gun with him on the 18th of May, and told me not to meddle with it, as it was loaded; he afterwards went away from Polstead every three or four weeks, and said he was going to see Maria, and before he went the last time, he said he would now be married, and that he would bring her to Colchester to see them. Her sister took two pair of shoes with her; one was of Denmark satin and leather fronts: I believe these produced to be one of those pairs of shoes.

*Thomas Marten* (evidently labouring under great mental affliction). I am the father of the late Maria Marten, who has had three illegitimate children, the last of which was by William Corder. I was not at home when she went away. I frequently saw Corder afterwards, and inquired about my daughter, who he said was very well. I asked him why she did not write? He said the reason was that she had a sore hand. Another time he said, "She is so busy when I am with her that she has no time to write." About a week before Corder last went away, he said the wedding-clothes were bought, and that he was going to be married, and should be back in three weeks or a month. I received three letters from him afterwards; but not hearing anything from my daughter, I became very uneasy, and at length determined to make a search. I did so, and found the body about eighteen inches under ground, in the bay of the Red Barn.

About six weeks before the 18th of May my daughter came home from Sudbury, with a child, of which she said she had been delivered, and that Corder was the father. She was very weakly; and some weeks after it was brought to my wife in the night, and it died in her arms. My wife put it in a box, wrapped in a napkin; and a few days after, Corder said he would take it to Sudbury to be buried: he took it away in the night-time.

*Ann Marten*, the stepmother of the deceased, after identifying the articles of apparel found on and near the deceased, deposed as follows: On the 18th of May, Corder came to me and said, that Mr. Baalham the constable had told him that he held a warrant to apprehend Maria for having had a bastard child, but to prevent this he would take her to Ipswich, and marry her the next morning. It was arranged that she should go out in his clothes, which he afterwards brought, and that she should exchange



them for her own in the Red Barn ; he said he would take her in a gig. He afterwards told me he had got a good place for her to be at, at Miss Rowland's, and that she would want for nothing, as he had changed a 40*l.* cheque for her. After this I often saw him twice or thrice a-day ; he always said Maria was well and happy, but he could not marry her till Michaelmas, in consequence of his brother John's death. My little boy told me that he saw Corder go from the barn with a pickaxe ; I mentioned this to Corder, who denied that it was him, but said it was John Acres, who was working in a plantation near the Red Barn. He told me that Maria changed her clothes in the barn, but she kept his coat over them till they got into a by-lane. I dreamed once before and once after Christmas, that my daughter-in-law was murdered, and buried in the Red Barn ; hearing no tidings of her, I became so very uneasy that I entreated my husband to make a search, and he did so.

*George Gardner* deposed, that he once asked William Corder, after the 18th of May, what had become of Maria Marten ? Corder said, " She is all right ; I suppose she is in the keeping of Mr. Matthews."

In consequence of this evidence, the coroner suggested the propriety of adjourning the inquest, and immediately despatching a person to London for the purpose of apprehending William Corder, who, it was suspected, resided there, but in what direction was not known at the time.

Ayres, an active constable living at Boxford, was the person fixed upon to perform this mission, and being supplied with instructions how to proceed from the parochial officers, and money to bear his expenses, he forthwith proceeded to the metropolis.

On his arrival in town, Ayres went to the Police-

office, Lambeth-street, and stated the discovery which had been made at Polstead, and the purport of his journey to town. The magistrates expressed their readiness to render every assistance in their power to capture the supposed murderer, and Lea, an active and intelligent officer, was immediately despatched with Ayres in pursuit of him.

Before Ayres left Polstead, he learned from his brother-in-law (Gardner), with whom Corder had been on close terms of intimacy, that if he called at No. 6, Gray's Inn Terrace, he would find a person with whom the prisoner had formed a connexion in London, and who might, perhaps, give such information as might lead to a discovery of his retreat. Thither the officers went in the first instance, and although they did not see the party they expected, they were referred to another place, and from thence to another, until they found out that the prisoner, as far as they had reason to believe from the description given of him, had married, and lived at a place called Grove House Academy, Ealing-lane, Brentford.

---

#### APPREHENSION OF WILLIAM CORDER, AND HIS REMOVAL TO POLSTEAD.

The evidence given by Lea upon the inquest, will show what transpired on his arrival at Brentford. The prisoner was conveyed to London by Lea and Ayres, after his person and premises had been searched, and taken to Lambeth-street Office, when after hearing a circumstantial account from the officers, the magistrates ordered them to proceed with all possible speed toward Polstead. This was on the 23d of April. The prisoner was then put into a hackney coach, and conveyed to the Bull at Ald-



gate, from whence he was immediately transferred to a stage going to Colchester.

Awful as was the offence with which he stood charged, the prisoner behaved with such levity as disgusted the passengers upon the roof of the coach, and those who were acquainted with the dreadful charge he had to meet, were truly astonished.

At nine o'clock the prisoner reached Colchester, and was put down at the George Inn. The news of his apprehension had preceded his arrival, and although the hour was late, crowds of persons of all ranks and degrees had collected in the front of the inn in order to get a sight of him.

After he had been conducted to a room, such was the intense anxiety of the public to gain admission to see him, that Lea and Ayres thought it prudent that he should be removed to a place of greater security, upon which Mr. Smith, the landlord, at their request, furnished a private room in which to place him. When this had been done, Ayres was left with the prisoner, and Lea proceeded to the gaol, where he saw Mr. Smith, the governor, to whom he related his business, and requested leave to lodge the prisoner in the gaol for the night.

Mr. Smith inquired of Lea whether he had any warrant in his possession, by which the prisoner was committed to any specific gaol; to which the officer replied in the negative. Upon learning this, Mr. Smith, the governor, refused to receive the prisoner into his custody. Lea remonstrated upon what he thought extraordinary conduct, but to no purpose.

Lea then proceeded to the house of Mr. Abel, a magistrate, to whom he stated the case, whereupon that gentleman sent for the governor of the prison, who, on his arrival, justified his conduct to the

magistrate on several distinct grounds. In the first place, he said that the prisoner had no warrant accompanying him, to commit him to any specific gaol. 2d. The offence with which the prisoner stood charged was committed out of the jurisdiction of Colchester Castle, of which he (Mr. Smith) had the charge; and in the third place, he had no person to attend upon the prisoner, and he might, therefore, lay violent hands upon himself, and if that should be the case, heavy responsibility would lie upon him.

The worthy magistrate did not appear to be able, or, if so, not disposed to combat those objections; it was, therefore, finally arranged that the prisoner should remain for the night at the George Inn. He was then taken to a chamber in a remote part of the house, where he was put to bed with Ayres the constable, to whom he was handcuffed by his right hand, and the left was secured to the bed-post, so that escape was impossible, and he could not, had he been so inclined, injure the constable. Before he retired for the night, he wrote a letter to his mother, of which the following is a *verbatim* copy:—

“Dear Mother—I scarcely dare presume to address you, having a full knowledge of all the shame, disgrace, and, I may truly add, for ever a stain upon my family, friends, and connexions. I have but few minutes to write; and, being unfortunately labouring under this serious charge, I have to solicit that you will receive Mr. Moore on Friday morning, with whom may probably be my injured, lawful, and I must do her the justice to say, worthy and affectionate wife. I have always received from every branch of their family the kindest treatment—hope and trust that the same will be returned by you the short time they continue in this part of the country, which, I am sorry I have to state, is to hear the event of this dreadful catastrophe. I am happy to hear that you are tolerably well, considering the present circumstance. I may, perhaps, be allowed an interview with you



in a day or two, but that, I find, is very uncertain. I must beg to subscribe myself your very unfortunate son,

“ W. CORDER.”

“ To Mrs. Corder, Polstead, Suffolk.”

Favoured by Mr. Catchpole.

\* \* The last paragraph of the letter had been altered by partial erasures. In clearing the blotted part, it ran thus, “ Must beg to subscribe myself your unfortunate, though unworthy son, W. Corder.”

On the following morning, the prisoner was visited by Sir William Rowley, and several magistrates and gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood, at the inn, where he yet remained in a state of *surveillance*. A great number of other persons were extremely anxious to see the prisoner, so that Lea, had he been so minded, might have reaped a rich harvest by receiving “ indulgence fees,” but he too well understood his duty to be thus tampered with.

Among those who saw him was the Rev. Mr. Seaman, a respectable and pious clergyman, who lives near Colchester, and who has been long acquainted with the prisoner’s family. The reverend gentleman begged of the prisoner to accept of his humble services, and enjoined him to attend to the advice which he should give him, at the same time presenting Corder with a hymn book, handsomely bound. In the course of a long conversation, the reverend divine asked him how he came to swerve from the path of virtue, and urged him to unbosom his mind to him as to a sincere friend, and, upon the pledge of inviolable secrecy. Corder listened with fixed attention to what was said, but made no direct answer to any inquiry which was specifically put to him, but he repeatedly acknowledged, in general terms, that he was a very great sinner. The reverend gentleman exhorted him, by the mercies of Christ,

to commence the work of sincere repentance immediately; and then, if he were guilty of the foul crime imputed to him, he might hope for pardon at a higher tribunal than that before which he would, perhaps, have shortly to appear. On the other hand, should there be no ground for the charge, and he should be able to establish his innocence, even then repentance would render him a better man, and enable him to pass through life with virtue and honour. The prisoner thanked the reverend gentleman for his attention, and expressed the obligations he felt for his advice and good wishes.

After this the prisoner was visited by Mr. Moore, his wife's brother, who is a respectable jeweller in London. Mr. Moore said to him, "How could you send letters that you were living happily with Maria Marten, when, at the same time, you were living with my sister, whom you had married." Corder replied, sullenly, "I shall not answer any questions now; I shall say nothing about it." Lea, the officer, whose conduct throughout this business is very creditable to him, and to the establishment to which he belongs, here came in and interposed. He suggested that it was highly improper, as well as indelicate, to pursue such inquiries in the present stage of the business. Mr. Moore felt the force of the remark, and immediately desisted.

There appeared to be a decided difference in the conduct of the prisoner, when compared with that of the preceding day. He sometimes paced the room with a silk handkerchief thrown loose over his neck, with his eyes cast upon the ground, and scarcely speaking to any one for an hour together. At other times he would sit down and look at some religious books and tracts; which had been given him, but from the hurried manner in which he turned over the leaves, it was quite manifest that his mind was in too perturbed a state to peruse the contents with any degree of profit or attention.



During the day he was frequently speaking of his wife, and more than once exclaimed, "Oh that I could be as free from sin as my beloved wife is!" In the course of the day, Dr. Nunn, a gentleman well known in the medical world, paid a visit to the prisoner; and had this gentleman been a Rev. Doctor he could not have exhorted and advised the unhappy man with more pathos and feeling; indeed, we were told, by a person from Polstead, who was with him nearly the whole day, that Corder appeared more deeply affected by what this gentleman said than by the exhortations which had been previously given him.

About nine o'clock in the evening of this day (Thursday) the life of the prisoner was again put into jeopardy, by another and distinct implication of guilt,—viz.

#### A CHARGE OF FORGERY

was added to the dreadful one upon which he was already detained in custody. Hearing that the prisoner was at Colchester, Mr. Taylor, the chief-clerk at the banking-house of Messrs. Alexander and Co., at Manningtree, accompanied by Mr. Dale, the proprietor of the White Hart Inn, opposite the bank, arrived in a chaise at the George Inn. Upon their being introduced to the room where Corder was sitting, they both immediately recognised him as being the person who had obtained 93*l.* from the above bank, upon a forged check.

Mr. Taylor approached the prisoner with the check in his hand, and said to him, "Pay me the 93*l.* you received upon this check." The prisoner was mute from astonishment, and hung down his head. Mr. Taylor, again addressing him, sternly said, "Why don't you look me in the face like a man!" To this challenge the prisoner made no

reply, but continued to hang down his head as before; but at length he threw himself into a chair, and hid his face in his hands. During this interview the prisoner neither admitted nor denied the forgery imputed to him, and Mr. Taylor and Mr. Dale left the room.

The following are the circumstances under which the check was presented and cashed, for the knowledge of which we are indebted to Mr. T——:—

“ On Monday, the 14th of April, a person known by informant and Mr. Dale to be the prisoner, arrived at the White Hart Inn, at Manningtree, which is kept by the latter gentleman, and whose house is opposite the Bank, in which informant is principal clerk, and he said that he had a check which he wished to get cashed. Mr. Dale told him he was too early, as the Bank was not open; but if his business required haste he would speak to informant to expedite it.

“ The prisoner said, that he was not in a hurry, and there the matter, for the time, rested. A short time after, Mr. Dale met with informant, and told him of the circumstance; and soon after the Bank was opened, the prisoner went over and presented a check purporting to be drawn upon the Hadleigh branch of the same firm, by R. Atkins, in favour of Mr. Cooke, and asked informant to give him cash for it. The check was for 93*l*. Informant told the prisoner, that he was not acquainted with Mr. Atkins or Mr. Cooke, and that it was not a usual thing for him to change checks for unknown persons.

“ To this the prisoner replied, that he was well known in the neighbourhood, that his name was Cooke, that he was a farmer at Wenham Hall, and that he had received the check on the previous



Saturday from Mr. Atkins, who was a butcher, residing at Stratford, in payment of five head of cattle. Informant replied, that he had never seen the name of Atkins to a Hadleigh check before. The prisoner repeated, that he was well known in the neighbourhood: and that Mr. Dale, who lived at the White Hart Inn opposite, knew him very well. Informant said, that if Mr. Dale would come over and state that he knew him, perhaps he might be satisfied. Mr. Dale did come over shortly afterwards, and said that he knew the prisoner, by having seen him frequently at his house. Informant then gave cash for the check, viz. 85*l.* in 5*l.* local bank notes, and eight 1*l.* notes. The prisoner immediately left the place, and went to Ipswich, where he got sovereigns in exchange for the notes. On the same evening, informant having sent the check to Hadleigh, discovered that it was a forgery, and Mr. Atkinson (not Atkins), who resides at Stratford, denied all knowledge of it.

The check was filled up on a printed form, of the Hadleigh Bank, at which place Mrs. Corder, the prisoner's mother, keeps her cash. Something which had been inserted in the newspaper descriptive of the prisoner was the cause why informant and Mr. Dale were induced to go to Colchester to see the prisoner, who, they were quite sure, was the person who presented and obtained cash for the check."

Lea, the officer, was present when a statement similar to this was made by Mr. T——; and he recollected that, after he had searched the house at Brentford, the prisoner asked him whether he found eighty sovereigns in the drawer of the writing-desk. He declared that he had made no such discovery, upon which the prisoner said, "then I dare say my wife has taken them out." After this, Mrs. Corder came to the Red Lion, at

Brentford, and acknowledged that she had taken out twenty sovereigns, which she placed in the prisoner's hands.

---

#### REMOVAL FROM COLCHESTER TO POLSTEAD.

At an hour approaching to midnight, the prisoner was removed from Colchester, well secured, and in the custody of Lea and Ayres. Having taken their places in a post-chaise, they set off with all speed toward the Cock Inn, at Polstead. The removal at this late hour was at the suggestion of Sir William Rowley, who considered that it would obviate those popular excitements, which the circumstances of the case were calculated to produce. There was also this additional and paramount consideration suggested from the motives of humanity which swayed the mind of the worthy Baronet;—the prisoner would have to pass the door of his aged and heart-broken mother, on his way to the Cock; she is much respected in the neighbourhood, and he wished to give her as little pain as possible.

The chaise reached Polstead about two o'clock in the morning. During the greater part of his journey the prisoner slept soundly; but on descending Stoke Hill, near his native village, he aroused himself, and, on passing his mother's residence, he was dreadfully agitated. After he recovered himself, he spoke with much apparent feeling of the manner in which his family had been cut off, by death, within the last fifteen months. He pointed out the pond in which his brother Thomas had been drowned; and two other brothers had since, he said, died of a consumption, and he was the only remaining male branch of the family!!!

There being a very steep hill leading from the



pond before alluded to, to the Cock Inn, the prisoner and officers alighted from the chaise, and walked up it ; but on their arrival, Mr. Gordon had retired to rest, naturally supposing that the party would not arrive until the next day. A fire was immediately lighted, by which the prisoner sat for some time, and after partaking of some slight refreshment, he retired to bed. The officers slept in the same room with him ; but he appeared extremely restless and frequently referred to the solemn inquiry which was to take place in a few hours ; but he neither uttered an expression with a view to implicate or exculpate himself. Indeed, the extraordinary manner in which the prisoner appeared to bridle his tongue, during the whole investigation, was very remarkable. From the window of his chamber he beheld a number of fields which belonged to his mother, and to which he made frequent allusions. Maria Marten's cottage could also be seen, and the pasture which she crossed on the fatal day when she left her father's house, her child, and her kindred, to become the victim of a cold-blooded and deliberate assassin !

---

#### ADJOURNED CORONER'S INQUEST.

On the following Friday morning the inquest was resumed, and the same jury empannelled as before. During the interval between this period on the finding of the body, Polstead had been one continued scene of bustle and inquiry ; but, on this occasion, it was literally crowded with strangers from all parts of the adjacent country, for the news of this appalling discovery had ere this reached the remotest parts of the kingdom.

---

## THE CORONER AND THE PUBLIC PRESS.

When the jury had been sworn, in order to the further prosecution of their inquiries, there were from twelve to fifteen reporters present, who had been sent from London, Bury, Ipswich, Chelmsford, and Colchester, which Mr. Wayman, the Coroner, observing, stated, with great urbanity and politeness, that he could not, consistently with his duty, allow notes of the proceedings to be taken for publication. The learned gentleman, in support of this mode of procedure, cited the case of *The King v. Flint*, which went to show that it had been pronounced an offence to publish the proceedings of an inquest before the trial of the party accused; and, in allusion to the case of John Thurtell, he observed, that one of the judges had censured a coroner for allowing it. As the present was only a preliminary inquiry; friendly as he was to the liberty of the press, he had a paramount duty to perform, and, therefore, would issue his mandate that no notes be taken, for the purpose of publication.

Mr. *T. J. Wooler*, who attended specially for one of the London Journals, addressed the Coroner at considerable length on behalf of himself and the gentlemen connected with the public press. He admitted that, in the case cited by the learned Coroner, Lord Tenterden, the Chief Justice of the King's Bench had ruled, that the Coroner was clothed with supreme power, in the court where he presided, to prevent that which himself and others, requested as a boon, but did not demand as a right; at all events, the decision of his Lordship did not extend to the exclusion of the public. He (Mr. Wooler) would, therefore, put it to the candour of the Coro-



ner, whether it would not be better to permit notes of the proceedings to be taken, so that a correct report might go forth to the world, which could not be expected to be the case, if memory only was to be relied on.

Mr. *Wayman* said, he did not feel disposed to argue the expediency of the case in question; it was enough for him that it was the law, and nothing could absolve him for a departure from that, and for acting in opposition to the decisions of the high law courts. Whatever might be his private opinion, his duty was to act judicially.

A reporter, connected with the London press, said, that he had been fifteen years in the habit of attending upon similar inquiries, and this was the first time he was prohibited from performing his duty.

The Coroner, however, remaining determined, every reporter put his book into his pocket; and here the conversation ended, and the investigation was resumed.

The following are the names of the Coroner's Jury:—

Mr. Robert Green, of Polstead, Farmer, *Foreman*.

William Brown, of Polstead, Farmer.

Richard Postern, of Polstead, Farmer.

Joseph Bowtell, of Polstead, Farmer.

George Payne, of Polstead, Grocer.

Thomas Wilson, of Stoke, Tailor.

Isaac Jackson, of Stoke, Farmer

Nuttan Gymer, of Stoke, Schoolmaster.

James Mortimer, of Stoke, Carpenter.

Nuttan Ayers, of Boxford, Farrier.

Thomas Foster, of Boxford, Miller.

James Cooke, of Boxford, Innkeeper.

John Cooke, of Boxford, Smith.

Mr. *John Baalham* examined.—I am constable of Polstead, and have been so some time. During the month of May last, or at any other time, I never told William Corder, that I had a warrant in my possession for the apprehension of Maria Marten, for giving birth to illegitimate children.

At this period of the proceedings Mr. Humphreys, the solicitor from London, entered the room, and on behalf of the prisoner, William Corder, applied to the Coroner to allow his client to be present to hear the evidence which might be adduced against him, so that, with the assistance of his legal adviser, he might be enabled to put such questions to the witnesses as might tend to exculpate him from the crime with which he stood charged.

Mr. Humphreys proceeded to urge that it would be impossible for his client to meet so serious an accusation, unless he went into court with something like a knowledge of the evidence which had been given against him at the Coroner's Inquest. In a case of felony, an accused person, by the statute of Philip and Mary, had a right to hear the examination of witnesses before the Justices previous to the trial.

The *Coroner*, who listened attentively to what had been said, requested Mr. Humphreys to cite a case from the law books, to show that a person accused of murder had a right to be present at the Inquest on the body of the party murdered.

Mr. *Humphreys* then referred the Coroner to the case of Richard Patch, who was at the Inquest held on the body of Mr. Bligh, of Rotherhithe; but notwithstanding which Patch was afterwards convicted and executed for the murder.\*

\* Vide *Newgate Calendar Improved*, vol. iii. p. 166



Mr. *Wayman* replied that the case of Patch was not analogous to this, inasmuch as at the time the inquest took place he was not in custody, nor, for ought that appeared, even suspected of being the murderer.

Mr. *Humphreys* then adverted to the case of Weare, but after a desultory conversation he acquiesced in the proposition made by the Coroner, namely, that all the depositions should be read in the presence of the prisoner. The examination of witnesses was then resumed.

*George Marten* examined.—I am brother to the deceased, on my father's side. I was ten years old on the day my sister went away. In the afternoon of that day I saw Corder go from the Red Barn across two fields, with a pickaxe on his shoulder; he was going in the direction of his own home. I was only twenty rods from him, and I saw his face very plainly.

*Phæbe Stows* examined.—I live in the nearest cottage to the Red Barn. One day in last year, before the dinner things were cleared away, William Corder came to my house, and asked me if I could lend him a spade of my husband's. I replied that I had an old one which was good for but little; he said any thing will do for what he wanted it for. I fetched the spade; and when he came back, the prisoner asked me how I did? I answered, very weak and low. Corder said, I am in a hurry, and cannot stop to speak with you. I did not observe any confusion in his manner. I do not know when this took place. I was confined on the 29th of April, and went to church that day four weeks, and it happened in the interval; I do not remember when the spade was returned.

*Francis Stows* examined.—I am husband of the last witness. I did not miss a spade. I assisted last harvest in filling the bay in the barn where the body was found. William Corder came in soon after we began, and superintended in laying the second and part of the first loads. Corder said, in a joking way, "Frank, there's a constable coming for you." I answered, "I do not care for any constable." One day, when we were at dinner, or bever (i. e. luncheon), in Thistley Lay, Corder came up and said, "I'll give you a pound note to cut my throat." Towns, the foreman, asked him how he could run on so. He was laughing when he said it.

*James Lea* examined.—I am a police-officer. In consequence of an application at Lambeth-street office, by the constable Ayres, I afterwards apprehended William Corder at a boarding-school, called Grove House, situate in Ealing-lane, Brentford. When I went to the house Corder came out of a room to me in the hall; I told him I was come on some business I had with him, and he asked me into the drawing-room. I then told him that it was a serious charge I had against him, and he must consider himself a prisoner; he replied, "very well." I then told him that it was respecting a young woman named Maria Marten, with whom he formerly kept company in Suffolk, and who having been missing a length of time great suspicion existed respecting her. The prisoner said, "*I never knew any such person even by name.*" I told him to recollect himself, while I repeated the inquiry twice over; and I said, "Did you ever know a young woman by that name?" he replied, "*No, I never did.*" I then told him I would put no more questions on that point. I took the prisoner to the Red Lion public-house, at Brentford, and left him in the custody of Ayres; and then returned to search the house where the prisoner lived. In a desk which I



unlocked with a key taken from the prisoner, I found a passport for France, dated December the 20th, and four letters, all of which I produce. In the dressing-room I found a black velvet reticule, containing a pair of detonating pistols; maker's name "Harcourt, Ipswich;" a flask with powder and bullets, and a bullet mould. The prisoner told me that he bought them when he was ten years old.—[The Coroner observed, that the detonating principle was a much more recent invention.]—On the way to the Red Lion I told him that the body of Maria Marten had been found. He made no reply at first, but when we had got about twenty yards he asked me when it was found.

*Ann Marten*, the step-mother, was called in, and on the reticule being shown to her she burst into tears, and said, "Oh, this was my daughter's, this was poor Maria's; I saw her put it into her bag on the day she went away. On that day I heard no words between Corder and Maria, of an angry nature, but she was very low. When Corder told her that the constable had got a warrant against her, she cried very much. I have often heard them dispute about a 5*l.* note; and Maria used to say to him you have taken away the bread which belonged to me and the child. On one occasion, when they were so quarrelling, I heard Corder say, "Pray, Maria, don't tell me of that note any more; you shall have a shilling as long as I have one, and your child too." I heard my daughter say to him, "If I go to prison, you shall go too." She often said this; once about a week before she went away with him.

*William Towns*, the foreman to the prisoner's mother, examined.—Last harvest the prisoner ordered the bay in the Red Barn to be filled with wheat; I think the fodder or litter had remained there since the year before. The bay was cleared

of corn last year before Stoke fair, which begins on the 16th of May. William Corder managed the farm after his brother's death.

*Ann Marten* (having been to examine the clothes) said, I know the handkerchiefs to be the same my daughter had on the day she left; and the bonnet was that taken by Corder in the bag; the pieces of shift I know to be my daughter's work; I know the shoes by their being tipped at the heel. I saw my daughter put an ashen busk into her stays on the night before she went away.

*Lucy Baalham* examined.—In the week after last Stoke fair, I cleaned William Corder's room, when the lid of his box fell off by accident. I saw a pair of kid gloves, and pair of boots, or high shoes, of Denmark satin, calashed with leather, in it.

*Mr. Robert Offord* examined.—I am a cutler, and live at Hadleigh. About this time last year, or a little before, William Corder came to my shop with a small sword, with a scymitar blade, about twelve inches long; it had an ivory handle, and was mounted with brass. He wished it to be ground, and be made as sharp as a carving knife. He said he had a cousin going to be married, and that he should sit at the head of the table to carve with it! I did as I was directed, and he called for it the same evening, and paid for it.

*Mr. John Lawton* examined.—I am a surgeon, and live at Boxford. I was present when the body was viewed by the gentlemen of the jury, and made as minute an examination as I could. I first took off some pieces of sack which covered it; the body was lying upon the right side, with the head forced down upon the shoulder. There was an appearance of coagulated blood upon the cheek, and there ap-



peared to be blood upon the clothes and handkerchiefs. The green handkerchief round the neck had been pulled tight, so that a man's hand might be put between the knot and the fold, and under it there was the appearance of a wound from a sharp instrument, but that part was so decomposed, I can only say that it had that appearance. The internal bone of the orbit of the right eye was fractured, as if a pointed instrument had been thrust into it, and the bone dividing the nose was displaced; the brain was in such a fluid state, that I am unable to say whether it had sustained any injury or not. Such a stab as I have described might have penetrated the brain. I found no injury in any other part; but there were two small portions of bone in the throat, which might have passed thither from the nose or orbit of the eye. I think the handkerchief was drawn tight enough to have caused death; the neck of the deceased appeared very much compressed indeed. The sack had evidently been tied after the deceased\* had been put in head foremost. I had the mouth of the sack in my hand.

Mr. *Wayman*, the Coroner, signified that all the witnesses in attendance had been examined.

Mr. *Humphreys* then addressed the Coroner, and said, "Sir, as the evidence has been gone through, I propose that my client be permitted to come into the room to hear it read."

The Coroner ordered the officers to be sent for, and commanded them to produce Corder.

During the solemn investigation, Corder had been confined in an upper room, accompanied by a con-

\* In a supplementary deposition since the exhumation of the body, this witness gives it as his decided opinion that a pistol ball entered the neck about the jugular vein, and proceeded, in an oblique direction, to the eye on the opposite side of the head, which would have produced the fracture before alluded to on the orbit.

stable; and, when Lea told him for what purpose his presence was required below, he scarcely made a reply, but prepared to accompany the officer.

Lea then ushered the prisoner into the room, properly handcuffed, and every eye was fixed upon him. He was enveloped in a large Spanish cloak, and appeared extremely exhausted and agitated; indeed, he scarcely seemed capable of supporting himself from fainting. This being observed, the Coroner ordered him a chair, and then commenced reading the evidence which had been adduced against him. While the Coroner was thus employed, the prisoner sometimes appeared very much agitated, and, at others, so absorbed in thought, as to be apparently inattentive to what was passing; his mind and body seemed to be completely overwhelmed. When the depositions taken on the Sunday, when the Marten family were examined, had been read, Mr. Humphreys, the solicitor, advised the prisoner to retire, and confide in him for the rest, in which request the prisoner seemed willing to acquiesce.

Before he left the room, the Coroner addressed him, and said, "William Corder, you are charged with the wilful murder of Maria Marten, and I shall be very happy to hear any thing which you have to say, or listen to any evidence which you can adduce, in proof of your innocence. You have heard what some of the witnesses have said against you, therefore you are at liberty to invalidate their testimony if you can, or be silent, as you may think proper." After advising with his attorney, for by this time the prisoner had become more composed, he rose, and bowing to the Coroner, as if to thank him for his kind advice, retired with the officer without uttering a word, and he was re-conducted to his former apartment to await the verdict of the jury.

Mr. *Wayman* then addressed the jury, and ob-



served, that, as the evidence was concluded, he would recapitulate the whole of it if they thought proper, and make such comments upon it as might appear necessary, as he deemed no exertion of his own too great in an affair of such momentous importance. That a murder had been committed, there could not be the least possible doubt ; and the question for the jury to consider at present was not by what instrument or weapon the deceased came by her death, but merely to say whether there had been sufficient evidence to convince them that the prisoner was the murderer.

Mr. *Green*, the Foreman, having conferred with his brother jurors, informed the Coroner that they did not wish him to read the evidence, but they begged to be allowed to retire to consider their verdict.

The jury were then conducted to a separate room, where they remained for about half an hour, and, on their return, the Coroner inquired whether they were agreed?

The Foreman said, Yes, unanimously. We return a verdict of WILFUL MURDER AGAINST WILLIAM CORDER.

The *Coroner* immediately issued his warrant, directed to Mr. Orridge, the Governor of Bury gaol, to receive the prisoner into his custody, and him safely to keep, until he be brought to trial at the Assize and Gaol Delivery for the County of Suffolk, then next ensuing.

---

#### DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT OF THE PEASANTRY, &c.

During the time the Coroner and jury were sitting to hear evidence upon this solemn and important investigation, the conduct of the peasantry and rabble

in and about the Cock public-house, was of the most indecent and disgusting description. In all probability, Polstead Green never, even at the time the fair is held, presented such a motley and disorderly group of beings.

Upon such an occasion as this, it was to be expected that, amid all the bustle and anxiety which were unavoidable, there would, at least, have been something like outward decency of deportment, especially as the populace had only to turn their heads to behold the building where the unhappy victim lost her life. The enquiry being instituted, to ascertain whether the son of an aged and respectable widow, living at a short distance, was or was not a murderer, ought to have taught the populace, at least, to respect her feelings; but, instead of this, all was riot and confusion. The manners of the people were such as would have induced a stranger, unacquainted with what had transpired, to have believed that they had assembled for purposes of hilarity and mirth, rather than to witness a judicial enquiry as to the means by which a fellow-creature was deprived of life—an enquiry, too, upon the result of which, the existence of another fellow-creature was suspended.

In one of the rooms situate near to that in which the Coroner and the Jury were performing their important duties, a large party assembled and amused themselves in singing noisy and objectionable songs, and exhibiting other symptoms of boisterous mirth. Such was their conduct, that Mr. Gordon, the intelligent host of the Cock Inn, declared himself quite disgusted with the nuisance, which it was impossible for him to abate, much less suppress. We are sorry to be under the necessity of recording this fact, because we have always been taught to believe, that the peasantry of this county were proverbial for their kindliness of feeling, and simplicity of manners, which are so beautifully de-



scribed by the inimitable Suffolk poet, Robert Bloomfield. Had that immortal bard lived to have seen such a negative given to his poetic effusions, he would have shrunk back with horror—or had he beheld his countrymen on the present occasion, we should not have been surprised to have heard him exclaim, as he did when his *Farmer's Boy* was translated into Latin,

Hey, Giles, in what new garb art dress'd!

Solemn visitations of providence like these ought to have the effect of exciting reflection and commiseration, instead of being turned into an occasion for tumult, drunkenness and debauchery.

---

#### DEPARTURE OF THE PRISONER FROM POLSTEAD FOR BURY GAOL.

After the verdict was returned, it was made known to the prisoner, who appeared not to be in the least degree surprised at the conclusion to which the jury had arrived. Some refreshments were provided for him, of which he partook. He appeared to suffer considerable mental agony, and at his request, he was supplied with a glass of rum, which appeared to revive his spirits. Before his departure several of the gentlemen of the jury, to all of whom he was well known, went into his chamber to take a last farewell. These visits affected him much, and he seemed unable to support the presence of his old neighbours, for he hid his head under the bed clothes. Mr. Pryke, the bailiff to the prisoner's mother, waited upon him, and remained in low conversation for some minutes. Towns, an old and faithful labourer of his late father, was then introduced, and the interview was very affecting. Upon taking him by the hand, the old labourer, with tears in his eyes, said with much feeling "Oh!

Master William, I am sorry that it has come to this ;” he then exhorted the prisoner to read the Holy Scriptures, and consider them as the best instructor in the day of trouble. The prisoner listened to these kind exhortations, and by a nod of his head, appeared to signify that he would attend to them.

Upon leaving him, Towns said “I am very sorry that I was forced to be a witness against you, for you were always a good master to me,” and again exhorted him to seek for consolation in religious exercises.

Soon after this a post-chaise was drawn up to the door of the Cock Inn, which was a signal to the numerous spectators, that the prisoner was about to be removed to the place of his destination, pursuant to the Coroner’s warrant. At this time the concourse was so great, that it was with difficulty that Lea and the constables could clear a space for Corder to pass, so anxious were some to catch a glance, and others to execrate him. Having seated the prisoner in the chaise, Lea told him that he should accompany him to Bury St. Edmund’s, when the prisoner appeared to be much pleased with the arrangement. After the chaise had got through the multitude with considerable difficulty, (but there was nothing like an attempt at rescue,) it proceeded down the hill, followed by a great number of persons. On passing his mother’s house which is a respectable old-fashioned farmhouse, standing about twelve yards from the road, the prisoner became unusually agitated, and, in an agony of unaffected grief, and with a deep sigh, exclaimed, “Oh ! my poor mother !”—Had this filial feeling operated on his mind at an earlier period, how much evil would have been prevented ; but in consequence of a disregard to its dictates, what a number of families are plunged into hopeless ruin.



When the chaise arrived at Boxford, Lavenham, and other places where the prisoner had long been well known, immense crowds had collected, to obtain a sight of the prisoner, so intense was the excitement which this dreadful tragedy had produced.

Before he arrived at Lavenham the taciturnity which the prisoner had strictly observed for a considerable time, suddenly left him, and he became exceedingly communicative, and appeared to force conversation. Among other things he said that he could not help thinking that there was some truth in dreams, but whether the evidence of Mrs. Marten's dream, in reference to Maria, which he had heard read, led him to the subject, does not appear. "I had," said he, "two frightful dreams on the Friday night before you took me; I dreamt that I saw all my deceased brothers and sisters pass before me, dressed in white. I had a kind of presentiment that something was to occur, and I told my wife of the dream on the following morning. She told me not to be uneasy about it, for it was said, that "to dream of the dead, is a sign that you will hear of the living." The prisoner made no mention of the nature of the other dream.

After a time he resumed his conversation, observing, that he believed there was some reliance to be placed in the prognostics of fortune-tellers, for about twelve years since his fate had been foretold by an old woman, who declared that he had a great number of misfortunes and troubles to undergo, and that every undertaking in which he might engage would be unsuccessful.\*—He added, all her

\* It is a very unusual thing for those Sybils to prognosticate that evil shall befall those who are fools enough to believe that the ignorant vagabonds whom they apply to, can unfold the "Book of Fate," that mysterious volume, which cannot be read by the most wise, or its contents unravelled by the most virtuous. It is devoutly to be hoped, that this relation given by Corder

prophecies regarding me have come to pass, for everything has been unsuccessful.

The prisoner then made repeated allusions to the depositions which had been read to him by the Coroner, and remarked that they contained several untruths, and expressed regret that he had not continued in the room and heard them all read. He particularly alluded to the evidence of Mrs. Marten, who had said, that on the day he went for Maria, he brought a loaded gun to the house. He admitted that he had frequently taken a loaded gun there before, but denied that he had done so on that day. He also, with solemn asseverations, declared that he was not questioned by her on the Sunday

will not become an inducement to others to pry into futurity. Mankind are the daily recipients of sufficient blessings to be thankful for; why then should they endeavour, by forbidden means, to take an undue thought of to-morrow? On the other hand, while sojourning through this world, all men are more or less conversant with affliction in some shape or other; therefore why an anxiety to ascertain what further sorrows remain for them—"sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." We cannot close these reflections, without narrating a circumstance that has just come to our knowledge, which, it is hoped, will operate as a warning to those infatuated beings who spend their money upon fortune-tellers. At the late Chelmsford Sessions, a young woman was indicted for robbing her mistress of valuable property, to supply the cravings of one these harpies who prey upon the credulity and ignorance of their followers. It appeared that this old necromancer augured that the wench should captivate the eye of *a great man*, who would raise her from the humble situation which she then filled and make her his wife; but unless she did one thing, her fortune would, in every respect, be the reverse—and the thing to be done was, that she should rob her mistress of some valuable property, and place it in her (the sybil's) hands. Such was the infatuation of the simple girl, that, rather than "break the charm," she did as she was told; and, instead of her golden dream being realised, she was placed at the bar of justice to answer for her offence, covered with shame and confusion of face:—this, the most probable destiny which could have been imagined to result from following such wicked advice, had never been told her. "He that followeth evil counsel shall perish."



after the 18th of May, respecting his being seen on that day going from the barn with a pick-axe on his shoulder. After remaining silent for some time, the prisoner, addressing Lea, inquired if he had heard any thing about the child? Lea replied, "Yes, Mrs. Marten stated in her evidence, that it was very sickly, that it had been taken suddenly ill, and was brought to her bed side, when it expired, and that it was taken by the deceased and him (Corder) at a late hour of the night to Sudbury to be buried." The prisoner replied, "Aye, that is right, for it was in Sudbury that it was born." He then retrograded, in his conversation, to his earlier years, and observed that he had not received an education befitting a gentleman, but a good plain one, for he had been five years at a respectable boarding-school (at Hadleigh,) where he was not only taught worldly knowledge, but also instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, to which he for a time attended. He added with a sigh, "Ah! I might have done as well as any young man in the county of Suffolk, for I had many advantages in my favour." He then inquired of Lea whether he had heard any thing about a five pound note which had been sent by Mr. M—— to Maria to support the child? The officer replied that he had, upon which Corder said, "Aye, me and Maria had some words about it."

When the chaise had arrived at within a few miles of Bury, the prisoner observed that he had been differently situated in that town two years and a half ago; for he then prosecuted a man of the name of John Wright to conviction, and who was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for stealing corn. He then paused for a considerable time, and appeared to be completely absorbed in thought, but broke silence by observing, "There are two things which I much want—a Bible and a Prayer-Book." Lea told him that there was no doubt but

that he would be supplied with these and other religious books he might require when he arrived at the prison. He then said, "The world is nothing to me now, but I have an ardent wish that my wife might be with me in the gaol, for no person can contribute so much to my comfort ; she is a truly pious woman, and would do more for me than a minister of the gospel." Lea knew well that this request would not be acceded to, nevertheless he did not wish to render his prisoner additional uneasiness ; he therefore only observed that Mr. Orridge the gaoler was a very humane man, and there was no doubt but that he would extend every indulgence to him which he could consistently with safe custody, and the regulations of the prison, which were under the control of the visiting magistrates. At eleven o'clock, the chaise arrived at the gaol, when its ponderous doors were unfolded to receive the prisoner,

" That dread door by which the guilty enter,  
Ne'er to review the portal."

The prisoner seemed very much affected at the view of the gloomy mansion of which he was about to become an inmate, and indeed this circumstance is not a matter of surprise, for, under any circumstances, a gaol brings with it an association of unpleasant feelings to any one who has never been deprived of liberty ; if so, then, to a man who is only pressed down by misfortune, what must be the sensations of those who are burdened with guilt !

Lea embraced the earliest opportunity of informing Mr. Orridge of the prisoner's wishes in regard to his wife. He was informed that they could not by any means be complied with, and at the same time it was intimated to the prisoner, that in his case the regulations of the gaol, with regard to visitors, could not in the least degree be departed from. Upon hearing this, he heaved a deep sigh, but made no remark.



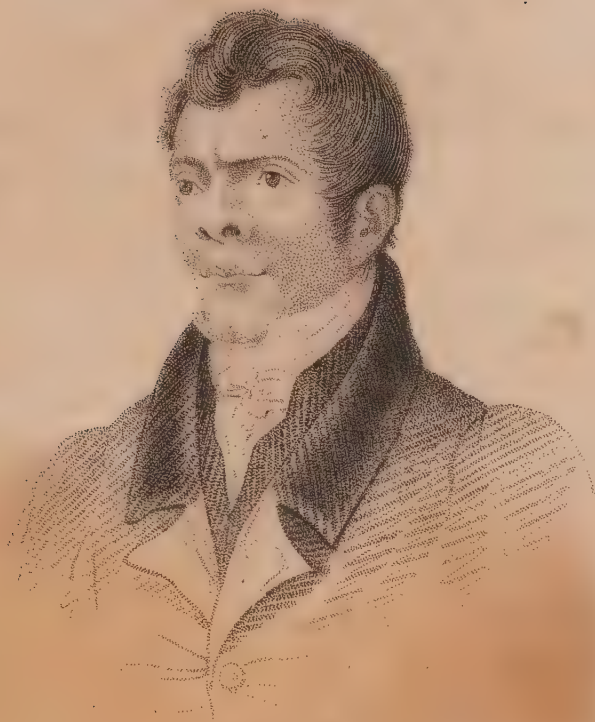
The handcuffs having been removed from the hands of the prisoner, the officers of the prison proceeded to secure him in a suitable manner, and with due regard to the impartial system upon which this gaol is conducted; so that the other prisoners could not complain that the mind of the governor was operated upon by a consideration of the former respectability of the prisoner now committed to his charge.

Lea then proceeded to take his leave, when Corder expressed his gratitude for the kind manner in which he had performed his duty. He then drew an embroidered silk purse from his pocket, which he begged Lea to accept as a token of remembrance; he said it was worked by his unfortunate wife. He regretted much that he had not got his watch with him, as he would have bestowed it as a more substantial proof of his gratitude.

---

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MARIA MARTEN

This unfortunate young woman was born at Polstead on the 24th July, 1801, and was therefore, at the time of her death, twenty-five years and ten months old. She was the daughter of Thomas and Grace Martin, and was born in the cottage in which her venerable sire now resides. Being of a docile disposition, she was taken, at an early age, into the family of the clergyman of Layham, a village at a short distance, to assist in the nursery, and here she remained until the death of her mother, which happened when Maria had just entered upon her tenth year. There were several other children, and, among the rest, Ann, who will be found an important witness in this solemn investigation, and who was then only four years of age.



WILLIAM CORDER.

*the murderer*



THOMAS HENRY,  
Maria Marten's Child.



MARIA MARTEN.

*the Victim*





The loss of his excellent partner, was a sad blow to old Marten, for he was much attached to her. She is represented as having been not only frugal and industrious as an housewife, but as performing the paramount and important duty of inculcating moral precepts into the minds of her infant children. Not being of an ambitious turn of mind, but contented with the station in which Providence had placed her, she, at the same time, set an example of connubial felicity, which rendered her abode “the Cottage of Content.”

Upon this bereavement, Maria’s father took her from her place of servitude, and she became his little housekeeper, and upon her devolved, in a great degree, at this early age, the cares of a mother; for, during her father’s absence, she had to tend and provide for her younger brothers and sisters. How she demeaned herself in this station, not only her father, but many of the inhabitants, can now testify. Her conduct was such, indeed, that she obtained the esteem and admiration of all who knew her.

For several years, Maria not only performed her domestic duties in an exemplary manner, but she appears to have cultivated her mind, and by instructions which were given, and her own assiduity, obtained a more extensive knowledge of the world than could be expected, in a person bereft, as she was, of her mother—surrounded with domestic care, and living, as she did, in comparative obscurity.

Having been blessed with a very retentive memory, and her mind deeply imbued with a desire to acquire useful knowledge, there is every reason to believe that, if she had received proper tuition, she would have made an accomplished woman. There was one trait in her character, which will have the tendency to increase the commiseration for her untimely and disastrous fate, *i. e.*, her filial piety. She always spoke of her deceased mother with affliction, and, doubtless, the lessons which that amia-



ble woman had instilled into her infant mind, had a due effect in the regulation of her conduct in the blossom of her youth. The affection which subsisted between her and her father was of no ordinary cast. Well would it have been had this ill-fated girl not suffered her early impressions to have passed away like the morning dew. Up to her seventeenth year, we behold Maria Marten living in a humble cottage content with her lot—a pattern in domestic economy for more matured dames, and would to God we had no dark shade to introduce into the picture.

Possessed as she was of no ordinary personal advantages, consisting of a handsome face, a fine form and figure, and, moreover, a superior address, accompanied with a modest demeanour—for innocence and purity then lodged in her breast—with such advantages and attractions, it cannot excite much surprise that she should have been beset by admirers; nor, when we reflect upon what human nature is, does it appear remarkable that she, an artless inexperienced girl, should have listened to the voice of flattery, and been led to fix her affections upon an object unworthy of her more mature consideration and esteem. This was her unfortunate lot, and, in her eighteenth year, the heretofore happy and innocent Maria listened to the persuasions of the base destroyer, and became a victim to his cupidity, and lost that inestimable pearl—the richest treasure which woman can possess—her virtue; (a loss doubly felt by a person whose mind was constituted like her's); and from this hour, instead of innocence and contentment, guilt and shame became her constant companions. The beginning of sin is like the letting out of water; and, when the line of demarcation between virtue and vice is crossed, it is impossible to calculate upon the accumulated evils which follow in a train.

Many reports have been in circulation as to who

was the first seducer of the rustic Maria; hence we have been led to make inquiries, and thereby obtained information from unquestionable sources.

Excited by the attractive beauties of Maria, Thomas Corder, a brother of William, the prisoner, was frequently induced to call at the cottage, by which he had daily to pass, in consequence of part of his father's grounds lying in that direction; and it is due to the young woman to observe that, from devotion to her domestic engagements, she kept herself very much secluded, and was not in the habit of walking out, as is the common practice of girls in her station of life; and it appears that she pursued this plan in a great measure even down to the time of her death.

It is said that Mr. Corder made honourable pretensions; and being the son of a wealthy farmer, and, moreover, a respectable, and, as far as figure went, what is called a "passable young man," it would have been a wonder, therefore, if a girl of her age and circumstances had rejected his proposals of honourable love. A strict intimacy was consequent upon these overtures; but it appears to have been kept a profound secret, by his desire, which probably arose from the disparity which existed between them in regard to property. Be this as it may, a regular correspondence was carried on, and that which was believed by her to be an honourable courtship became an illicit amour; in consequence of which, Maria became a mother. As is too frequently the case, when her real condition was ascertained, the visits of her lover became less and less frequent, until at last they were nearly relinquished altogether, and Maria was left to bewail her own imprudence, and to reflect on the broken vows of her lover.

That love, in the strict sense of the word, did not influence the motives of Thomas Corder, may be justly inferred from his subsequent conduct; for, although



he had every reason to believe that the young woman had been despoiled by him of her best treasure (and so thought those who knew her), he either from sordid motives, or otherwise, withheld that pecuniary support which was due to her, if he really had never intended to make her his wife. From some cause or other (perhaps with a hope that her seducer might relent and perform his vows) the deluded girl never went before a magistrate in order to obtain an order of affiliation, but Corder, who at least ought to have been grateful for this act of forbearance, only made her such an allowance, during her accouchement and afterwards for the support of the offspring, as would have been consequent on such an order.

This illegitimate infant, which was carefully nursed by its fond and youthful parent, died at a very early age, and was buried in Polstead churchyard, near to the spot where its wretched mother has at length found repose from her worldly cares and anxieties. This adds another link to the chain of mysterious circumstances with which this case is enveloped—viz., her having been seduced by one brother, and after a lapse of years forming a contract with another branch of the same family.

We now come to another part of Maria's unfortunate history. The connexion between her and Thomas Corder having been completely broken off, she formed an intimate acquaintance with a gentleman of great respectability, whose name we forbear to mention, because his conduct towards her has been in every respect honourable, and quite the reverse to that of the persons with whom she had been before and was subsequently acquainted. By this gentleman, Maria bore a child, which she named Thomas Henry (a portrait of whom will be found by the side of that of his ill-fated parent). This child, who is a beautiful boy, survives his wretched mother,

and lives in the cottage with his grandfather, and he is liberally supported, as he has ever been, by his natural father, who intends, when at a proper age, to have him properly educated, and make a future provision for him.

It is due to Maria to state the following fact, because it shews that she possessed a fine sense of honourable feeling. When the gentleman to whom we have alluded, first made overtures to her, she candidly told him of the connexion which existed between her and Thomas Corder, and confessed, that she was at that time pregnant by him; therefore when those overtures were renewed, he could have no reason whatever to impeach her integrity. —yea, perhaps it was her urbanity of manners which induced him afterwards to seek her acquaintance. That a girl having lost her character, and her own self-esteem, should proceed in the path of error may not be deemed marvellous, especially when it is considered, that her great fault, if it may be so deemed, was a playful and vivacious disposition, and a mind naturally sanguine—yea, perhaps ambitious.

It has already appeared in evidence, that words of anger had passed between William Corder and Maria, relative to his having obtained clandestine possession of a five-pound note, which was directed to her in a letter, to assist her in the maintenance of her surviving child. Corder on one occasion begged that she would never name the circumstance again, adding, at the same time, in the hearing of her family, that so long as he had a shilling, neither she nor her child should know want.

As a variety of reports have been circulated relative to this intercepted note (for there was only one), we give the detailed particulars as received from the lips of a person who was a party connected in the investigation.



Maria Marten not having received a remittance from a quarter from whence it had regularly come before, became uneasy, and wrote to the gentleman and frankly expressed her disappointment, and her necessities. In consequence of this communication, and more with a view to exculpate himself from a charge of remissness, than to recover the money, he instituted an inquiry at the post-office, which led to a discovery that the identical note sent by him had passed through the hands of a person of the name of Corder. In consequence of the complaint made at her office, Miss Savage, the post-mistress at Colchester, accompanied by a solicitor, went to Corder's mother, in order to inquire whether any of the family knew anything about the note in question, and if they did, from what source it was obtained.—It has already gone to the world that she or William Corder obtained change for the bill, but in order to involve the transaction in mystery, he had substituted the name of his brother James for his own; but it is only an act of justice to the prisoner to state that the fact is not so. When the solicitor and the post-mistress arrived, William Corder was at home, but protested his entire ignorance of the matter upon which the inquiry was made. A neighbour was sent for, who, understanding the nature of the investigation, went up to the church where John Corder, an elder brother to the prisoner, was engaged upon parochial affairs, but he was unable to give any elucidation of the affair. Mr. P—, the gentleman before alluded to, went over to Hadleigh Bank a day or two afterwards, when he had an interview with Mr. Baker, one of the firm, who asked him what was the Christian name of the Corder who was extremely short-sighted? The gentleman said it was William: upon which the banker observed, that he (or his son) had been led into an error, as they supposed, that the presenter of the bill was the younger bro-

ther, whose name, upon inquiry, they found to be James, and *they* had endorsed the name of "James Corder" upon it accordingly.

Mr. Baker, Jun. then observed to Mr. P— that he was quite certain that he took it of the one who had a defect in his eyes, for he perfectly well recollected observing to his (Mr. Baker's) father, after he was gone, "how uncommonly short-sighted that young Corder is." On the day subsequent to this interview, our informant called upon James Corder, and requested that he would speak to his brother William about it—he did so when the latter denied all knowledge of the transaction, but observed, that he was going to Hadleigh, when he would call and ascertain from the bankers themselves what they have to say about the matter, and he did go accordingly. When he went, he was extremely high and haughty, at first, and inquired what Mr. Baker meant by raising ill-grounded suspicions against him—and, at the same time, declared that he had mistaken his person. Mr. Baker, jun. replied that he was so fully confident that he (William Corder) was the person; that if necessity compelled him, he should not hesitate, for a moment, to make oath of the fact, at the same time advising him to go to Colchester, and get the matter settled as soon as possible; and it appeared, he went direct from Hadleigh to Colchester on the same evening; and the matter was so far arranged. To screen himself, however, from disgrace, and the consequences of a threatened prosecution for the offence, he compelled Maria to do an act which, afterwards, she extremely regretted, namely, to violate truth, by acknowledging, in contradiction to her former communication, that *she had* received the money, previously to its being made.

During the short interval between this transac-



tion and her sudden departure (as it was then thought) from Polstead, the gentleman sent his remittance by endorsing the half of a note, an acknowledgment of the receipt of which he required in Maria's hand-writing before he despatched the counterpart.

It does not exactly appear at what period a connexion of close intimacy commenced between William Corder and the unhappy victim, but it must have been a very considerable period before she was deprived of existence; it was no secret, and he not only promised her marriage, but avowed the same intention more than once in public company. This infatuated girl appears not to have learnt wisdom in the school of experience and affliction, or why should she have relied upon the promises of the brother of her first seducer, because she could not be ignorant of his character and disposition.

But so it was, and William Corder became the father of her third child. After her confinement, both she and her father frequently importuned Corder to perform his promise, and rescue her from contempt and ruin by an honourable alliance; but this he almost always found an excuse to postpone, but never went so far as to deny his obligation to fulfil his contract.

With regard to the child borne by Maria, of which Corder was the father, there is connected another circumstance of mystery. The infant gradually sickened and died a short time before its ill-fated mother, and it is proper to state that those who daily witnessed its gradual decline, consider that its death arose from natural causes. The clandestine manner in which the infant corpse was conveyed away from Marten's cottage has given rise to numerous conjectures, and as many will

have it, well-founded suspicions, that foul play had been used toward the babe.

It appears very extraordinary that Corder should have taken the child away in a box, in order, as he said, to have it interred at Sudbury : and the only reason he assigned for it was (and it does not appear very tenable,) that the infant was born at that place.

Since the discovery of the murder of the mother, strict inquiry has been made, when it was ascertained beyond a doubt that the child never received Christian burial at Sudbury, or, as far as can be learned, at any other regular cemetery in the vicinity of Polstead. It should be observed, because it adds to the wonder, that when Corder thus conveyed the child away, Maria accompanied him, and remained absent from home two days ; but this circumstance appearing natural, no inquiry was made relative to the child, and the affair would, in all probability, have been buried in eternal oblivion, had it not been for the catastrophe which led to the investigation.

In concluding this brief memoir of this truly unfortunate young woman, it is due to her to state that, although her conduct cannot be justified, much might be said in palliation. Depraved as she was, to a blamable extent, she was neither profligate nor abandoned. Upon the most rigid inquiry, it has been found that she was inflexibly honest in her conduct towards those upon whose protection and promises she relied. Censorious as the world is, and loth as mankind are to palliate the offences of others, we have heard very few of those who knew this hapless girl, and were cognizant alike of her good as well as her evil qualities, who do not regret her untimely end, and exclaim, that she deserved a far better fate.



What a lesson does the irregular life and dreadful end of Maria Marten present to our fair readers ; and if they duly consider it in the light they ought, they will discover, that virtue is a pearl of inestimable value, inasmuch as it is the possession of that which alone renders them amiable in the esteem of themselves, as well as in that of the world.

---

### THE VILLAGE OF POLSTEAD

In a topographical sense, the village of Polstead\* is comparatively large, especially when compared with its population. It contains 3300 acres and 900 inhabitants. It is pleasantly situated about nine miles from Colchester, fifteen from Ipswich, ten from Sudbury, and twenty from Bury St. Edmunds, and is in the hundred of Babergh. The village is rendered pleasant by its being composed of a variety of gently rising hills, from the summit of which an extensive view of the surrounding country presents itself ; which, being well wooded, and the land in a most excellent state of cultivation, presents a beautifully romantic prospect. Independent of several cottagers who till their twenty acres, and by economy and industry keep the wolf from the door, there are several large farmers, among which are Mr. Chaplin and the mother of William Corder. With regard to the peasantry, it is due to them to state, and to their praise be it spoken, that they eat not the bread of idleness, and that they are remarkable for cheerfulness and cleanliness. In addition to the blessings which attend the pursuits

\* Polstead Saint Mary, was formerly the lordship of James Lamburn, Esq., and is, at present, remarkable for its cherries. Here is a seat (Polstead Hall) of William Beal Brand, Esq. In this parish, there was anciently a chauntry of the yearly value of 6*l.* 6*s.* 0½*d.*—*Vide Kirby's Suffolk Traveller*, 1764.





*W. Pennington del et sculp.*

POLSTEAD VILLAGE FROM BELL HILL.

*London. Published by T. Kelly, Paternoster Row Sept. 29, 1828.*





of the agriculturists, who generally gather in average crops of grain, this village is remarkable for the production of an immense quantity of cherries, which are held in great esteem by the inhabitants of the surrounding country, and vast quantities are yearly conveyed to the metropolis. This appears to be a little source of wealth to many of the cottagers; and those who have not the good fortune to have an orchard of their own, are well paid by their neighbours to assist them in the gathering. Amidst all this luxuriance, and all the beauties of nature, the traveller who is led to Polstead, whether by curiosity or otherwise, has his attention almost exclusively directed to the Red Barn, the cottage where Maria dwelt, and to her grave.

Very near to the church, and at a short distance from the village, stands Polstead Hall, the beautiful seat of Mrs. Mary Ann Cooke, the relict of the late Thomas Cooke, Esq., who died about three years ago, during whose lifetime the spacious mansion was modernized and improved. The building stands upon the summit of a hill which rises gently on all sides, and has a wide and commanding prospect in every direction over the adjacent country. The park which surrounds it is of considerable extent, and contains some venerable oaks, and a large quantity of other timber and evergreens, which render it a delightful retreat in the summer season; and the public appear to be indulged with free access to it, although the park contains a quantity of deer, &c.

Mrs. Cooke is the lady of the manor, and possesses very large landed property in the parish and neighbourhood; she lives extremely retired, but devotes much of her time in attempting to meliorate the condition of the poor, and the promotion of Christian charity, thereby rendering her tenantry happy.

We cannot conclude this brief sketch without



noticing that there is a Sunday and day school for the youth of both sexes, which are numerous attended, and which were formed under the auspices of this lady, and they are patronised by the respectable inhabitants of the parish, by whom the establishments are supported. The children attend divine service at the church twice every Lord's day, and at the conclusion of the evening service, the Reverend Mr. Whitmore visits the school-room, for the purpose of catechising them, and instructing them in the first rudiments of Christian knowledge ; and, in addition to the precepts thus given, he exhibits, by his walk and conversation, an example worthy of their imitation. Schools formed under such auspices, and conducted upon such principles, cannot fail to prove not only a local, but a national blessing.

The boys attend a weekly day school, where they are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the girls, of whom there are a good number, are taught spinning, knitting, and other branches of domestic economy ; in addition to which, their patrons are not unmindful of their mental, spiritual, and moral improvement.

The two principal farm houses are inhabited by Mr. Chaplin and the unfortunate Mrs. Corder. The former is a fine brick building, fronted by a beautiful garden, which gently slopes to the margin of a large fish-pond. In the rear of the house is a steep hill, which shelters it from the northern blast of winter, thickly planted with evergreens, so that when viewed from the road leading to Boxford, its whole appearance is strikingly unique and romantic.

We feel bound to acknowledge our obligations to its respectable inhabitant, for the facilities which he has uniformly given us, in obtaining the information necessary to render this work genuine and authentic.





*W. P. M. del. et sculp.*

A CORRECT VIEW OF MARTIN'S COTTAGE.





## MARTEN'S COTTAGE.

The cottage of Thomas Marten stands near to several others in a line, and is the last house in the village, on the road which leads to the Red Barn, excepting a solitary cottage which stands about midway between the one and the other. This little retreat presents nothing to attract public attention, excepting the fact that it was under its roof that the unfortunate Maria had, with the exception of a short time, spent the whole of her existence. The building is small, and consists of only five rooms ; its walls are what are termed " whattle and dab," and the covering is of thatch.

It is partly surrounded by a garden and cherry orchard, the neat order of which show that they are assisted by the hand of industry. Next to the Red Barn, this humble cot attracts the attention of the visitors, the greater part of whom have to pass it on their way to the former building. A great number of persons, who called for the purpose of seeing the child of the unfortunate girl, and the other members of her family, did not forget to bestow some little token upon the motherless boy ; but many, to their shame be it said, dared to invade domestic privacy, and ask a thousand impertinent questions, without bestowing a single farthing.

The family at present consists of Thomas Marten, and Ann his second wife, and three of their children by the latter marriage ; also a son and daughter, the own brother and sister of Maria, who are grown to years of maturity, and are extremely well-favoured ; lastly, the surviving child of the hapless young woman, who was about three years and six months old at the time that the mangled corse of his unhappy mother was so mysteriously discovered.

The proprietor of this lowly dwelling appears to



be of the superior class of agricultural labourers, and is much respected by his superiors for his moral conduct and simplicity of manners.

At the back and front of the cottage grow a variety of rose trees, which, when full blown, have a pretty effect ; some of these were planted by poor Maria, and are said to have engaged a good deal of her attention ; but, alas ! her hand will never more guide the young tendril, nor prune off the superfluous branches. Here it was that she indulged in thought (for she was Reflection's child), and many doubtless were her struggles between love and duty. Near to the spot

The bat would flit with giddy wing,  
And on the barn-roof watch the cat ;  
Sweet breathe the ruminating beasts  
Near where Maria musing sat.

Such was the cot wherein Maria fell a victim to persuasion, almost ere reason had ascended its throne to direct her judgment : here she once lived happy, but by indulging lawless passions, was frequently rendered the subject of misery and despair.

It was in that humble abode, perhaps, that her last golden dream of emancipation from thralldom and disgrace was formed, and an idea of happiness burst upon her on the very day, too, when she went to the Red Barn, with the hope of becoming a wife ; little suspecting that she was about to meet a murderer instead of a husband.

---

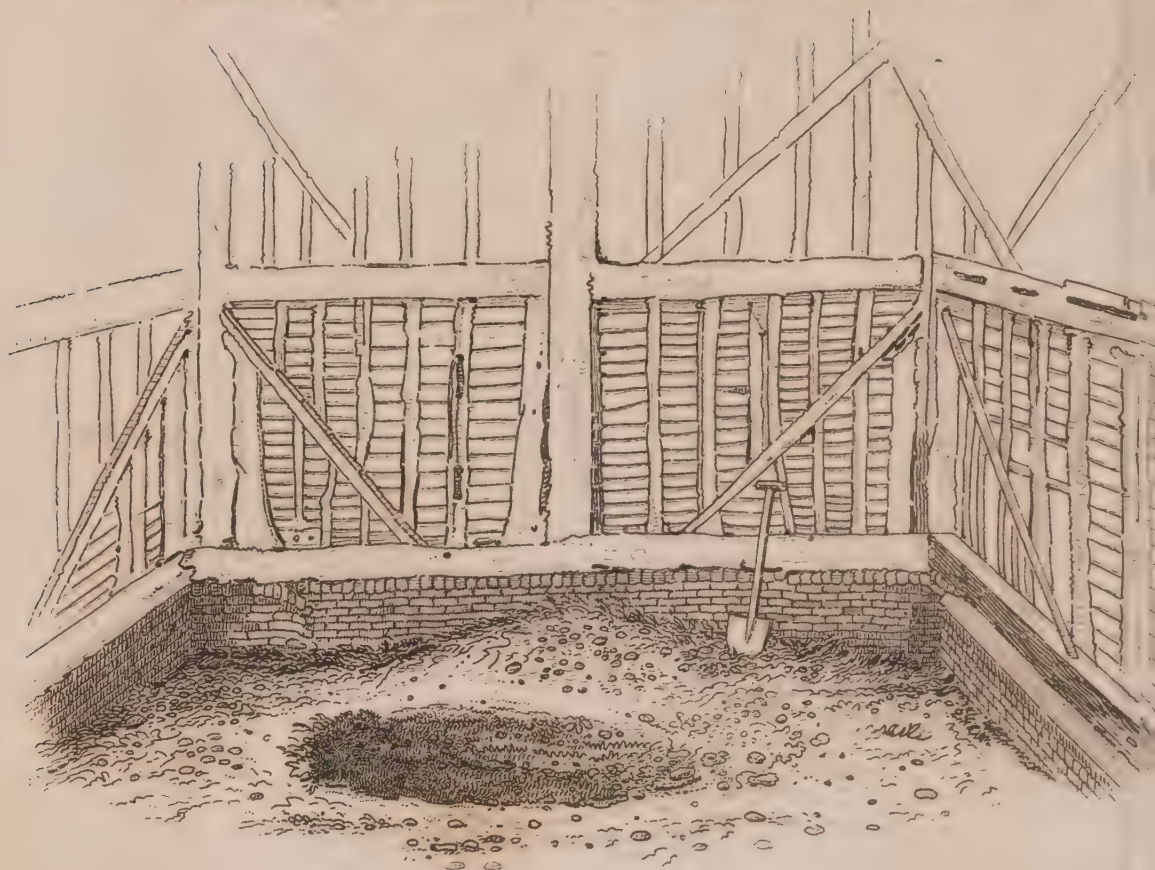
#### THE RED BARN.

This simple structure, which has acquired such a gloomy immortality from the deed of blood perpetrated beneath its roof, stands about a mile from Pol-





An accurate View of the Barn showing the hole  
from which the Body of Maria Warren was taken.



THE RED BARN AT POLSTEAD.

stead church, and about half that distance from the lowly cot where Maria Marten once lived, the innocent nymph of her native village.

It stands on the declivity of a field called "Barn-field Hill," which is itself situated in the midst of other large inclosures of arable land, one of which, from its extent, is called "Broad-field." The barn-yard, which is entered by a large gate, has sheds and outhouses on both sides, which attach to the barn, so that the area forms an imperfect half-circle. From the yard a narrow lane, about eighty yards long, leads to a cottage at the foot of the hill, at which place Corder borrowed a spade on the day upon which the murder was probably committed.

Many have supposed that at this cottage even a shriek might have been heard, had it issued from the spot where the unhappy girl was murdered; but from experiments we have made, we arrive at quite an opposite conclusion.

This barn has for a long time been rented of Mrs. Cooke by the Corder family, as well as the fields contiguous; and as Corder had frequently to go thither in the pursuit of his business, we understand that it was no uncommon thing for Maria to walk in that direction with him, and if a person could be diabolical enough to premeditate so foul a deed as that of murder, it is difficult to guess where, even in mid-day, a more secure place could be found for the perpetration of it. Corder made it no secret to the family that he and the unhappy girl were to meet at this spot; and it will be observed, that when Maria left her father's house she was dressed in a suit of male attire belonging to Corder, which was supplied by him, as he said, to prevent observation.

The barn at present exhibits a most desolate appearance, and were it not that a person was at length appointed to watch it daily, it would have been absolutely demolished, the boards having



already been stripped off to a very considerable extent, and some of the timbers taken away. This demolition did not arise from any motive of execration at the bloody act of which the barn had been the theatre, but because the visitors desired a relic to remind them of the tragical end of poor Maria Marten.

Since the time when the murder was first discovered, this spot has been visited daily by numbers of persons of all ranks, from the peer to the peasant, and it is considered that, upon a moderate calculation, two hundred thousand persons have been under its roof, many of whom have travelled fifty miles and upwards; and one gentleman came all the way from Carlisle. Although several months have elapsed since the fatal discovery, numerous are the visitors who go, as it were, on a pilgrimage to the Red Barn daily, and, like the pilgrims of the olden time, almost every one carries away a stone from the grave as a relic.

It is said that an extravagant price has been bidden for some particular pieces of wood connected with the building, for the purpose of making snuff-boxes, but the person in possession received strict orders not to listen to any such overture.

It is creditable to the feelings of human nature that whenever the barn has been visited, a silence has reigned among the spectators, as though they had been viewing the receptacles of the dead in a funeral vault, but it was sometimes, yea not unfrequently, broken by a sigh or a mournful exclamation of "Poor Maria," "poor thing," "ill-fated girl," &c. At other times the thoughts of the murderer gave rise to expressions such as these, "Cold-blooded villian," "Cruel wretch," and sometimes epithets opprobrious, in reference to this deliberate butcher of a fellow-creature, were uttered.

It is indeed difficult to describe the sensation which pervades the mind when you enter the building through the very door which the victim entered when she went to the slaughter. All the tale which has been unfolded rushes upon the recollection, and fancy almost portrays the scene as it had been in reality, and perhaps never was a grave bedewed with so many tears of genuine pity as that prepared by the murderer of Maria for the reception of her mangled remains \*.

It was given out in the country papers, and from them transcribed into several of the London journals, that the Reverend Mr. Whitmore, the rector of the parish, preached a sermon in the Red Barn, on Whitsun Sunday, to a large congregation, but there was not the least foundation for such a report. At the time the report was circulated, the reverend gentleman was from home, and the first intimation he had of it was on his return through Colchester, when he was informed of it by a friend, by which his astonishment was greatly excited.

\* If there be any thing connected with this tragical event calculated to excite a smile, it is the following little incident. One day the man employed to attend the barn, having gone across a large field to admit a gentleman and lady who were in a chaise, an itinerant vender of corks entered the Red Barn. Finding himself alone he resolved upon laying his *corpus* in the ill-shaped grave which had been prepared for the murdered remains, not only to ascertain in what position they were deposited, but also that he might hereafter have to say that he had laid in the grave of Maria Marten. "While lying snug tucked up (to use his own expression) in the little bed of earth," the gentleman and lady arrived at the barn, and on approaching the grave, the cork-dealer began to move, being much alarmed by the footsteps, whereupon the lady from fright shrieked so violently that she transmitted the like expression of terror to the poor cork-vender, who for a few moments became so paralyzed that he could not arise from the grave which he had had the temerity to enter. On his departure he said he was never so frightened in his life, and it was a considerable time before the lady perfectly recovered from her alarm.



The reverend gentleman considered that this report was a base attempt to lower him in his episcopal dignity, and took immediate steps in the affair by calling upon the proprietors of the Ipswich Journal and Suffolk Chronicle, and of the Kent and Essex Mercury, to give a decided negative to the report, which appeared to emanate from their respective journals, at the same time expressing his determination to take ulterior steps against them if they refused or neglected to do so.

The proprietors of the former paper inserted the contradiction in their journal of the 14th, and the latter on the 17th of June, and there the matter appears to have ended, without its being publicly known from what source either party obtained their information.

The reverend gentleman was, however, not only piqued that that insertion had been copied in the London papers, but mortified to find that they had not also inserted the contradiction, as he had reason to expect that he would be cited by his diocesan for this alleged deviation from the canon law, and the rubicon of the church of which he is a minister.

On Sunday, the 22d of June, the Reverend Mr. Young, from London, of the Independent denomination, preached a sermon in a large open space, at a short distance from, but still within view of, the Red Barn. As his intention had been made known through the medium of hand-bills, &c., persons flocked in from all directions; in fact, the village was literally crowded, as the whole green facing the Cock Inn, as well as the yard, was filled with carriages, chaises, and vehicles of almost every description. Never before, in all probability, did the village of Polstead contain so great a number of human beings at one time. Before the reverend gentleman commenced the service, it was thought by some that there were seven thousand persons present, but, at

a moderate calculation, there could not have been less than five thousand.

After suitable hymns had been sang on the solemn occasion, and a prayer had been directed to heaven for the Divine blessing upon his endeavours, the preacher delivered an appropriate discourse from the Prophecy of Ezekiel, chap. xxxii. ver. 11. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?”

The preacher commenced his address by remarking upon the bearing which the text he had selected as the motto of his discourse had upon the awful subject which had occasioned their meeting together at that time. The Almighty had, in those passages, declared by Himself that the penitent should obtain forgiveness, and that those who continued obstinately to persevere in sin to the end of their existence, should surely die for it, not only a natural, but a spiritual death.

He then descanted, at considerable length, upon the mercy, forbearance, and tenderness manifested by Almighty God toward sinners, and the anxiety which he expressed for the salvation of the human race, although they had broken His laws, and trampled His authority under their feet.

The reverend divine, in conclusion, made some very pertinent observations on the awful visitation which had befallen a fellow-creature, in the building then before the eyes of the multitude whom he was addressing, who, in the midst of her years and of health, and at a time, too, when dreaming of happiness for years to come, was

Cut off ev’n in the blossom of her sins,  
No reckoning made, but sent to her account,  
With all her imperfections on her head.

He entreated the younger part of his audience,



particularly the females, to learn wisdom by the downfall of the unfortunate young woman, whose death had created a sensation of commiseration throughout the whole kingdom. He advised them to take the Book of God as the guide of their youth, which inculcated chastity and modesty of demeanour, and forbade intemperance, and all irregular pleasures.

To the other sex, he recommended sobriety, and an abstinence from sin, even in its most diminutive shape, lest from small beginnings they should proceed step by step, as some had done, until at length they became monsters in iniquity, and rendered capable of committing offences not only heinous in the sight of God, but at which humanity shudders.

The reverend divine was listened to with profound attention by the dense multitude, excepting a few in the outskirts, who

Went to scoff, and not to pray.

The people appeared to be very much affected, especially when the preacher made allusions to the unhappy girl, by reason of whose death they were brought to that spot to worship God.

The evening was fine; and the spectator was led to reflect on what he had read relative to primitive times, when Christians had no temples, but met in groves, and on mountains, to worship God. We sincerely hope that the evangelical truths delivered, and the pious exhortations enforced that evening with pathetic eloquence, will be long remembered by the inhabitants of Polstead and its neighbourhood.

It has been rumoured that, after the trial, the Red Barn would be pulled down by order of the proprietor (Mrs. Cooke), but, upon enquiry, we find that there is not the least foundation for the report; and we are glad of it, because it will stand as a memento of the wretched end of Maria Marten, and the well-merited punishment of her vile and dastardly murderer.

## FUNERAL OF MARIA MARTEN

During the time the Coroner's Jury were sitting at the Cock at Polstead, a grave was prepared in the village churchyard, to receive the mutilated remains of the unfortunate victim.

Soon after the rising of the Inquest, the corpse was deposited in a decent coffin and screwed down, and at six o'clock in the evening, the tolling of the church-bell gave information that it was about to be conveyed to its resting place.

The coffin was borne by six young men of the village who had known the deceased, and the father, mother-in-law, sister, and other relations of the hapless girl followed in procession, and these were surrounded by hundreds of their neighbours and friends; some of whom sympathised with the surviving relations, others invoked the benediction of heaven on behalf of the spirit which had taken its flight from the mass of putridity then being conveyed to the grave; and some called upon "Him who knoweth all things" to punish the villain who had so inhumanly consigned a fellow-creature, in the prime of her life, into an eternal world, with "all her imperfections on her head."

The coffin having been conveyed into the church, which is about a mile from the Red Barn, where the victim was at first deposited, the Rev. Mr. Whitmore, the rector of the parish, read the usual service called "the Burial of the Dead," and which he afterwards concluded at the grave in a most impressive manner. It would be impossible to describe the sensations which pervaded the minds of the concourse of persons that had assembled on this melancholy occasion. The hour of interment was later than usual; the remembrances which flashed across some minds of the natural gaiety and goodnature



of the once blithesome Maria, or perhaps pity for her foibles ; the sobs of relatives and spectators, alternately mixing with the wind, which rustled among the larches and sycamores that overshadow and partly surround the grave—add to this the venerable appearance of the divine, who stood at the head of the grave in his surplice, and exclaimed, “ In the midst of life we are in death : to whom should we seek for succour,” &c. ; all these circumstances combined, made an impression which it is to be hoped that time will never obliterate.

The solemn service concluded, the grave, which is on the south-west side of the churchyard, was filled in, and the multitude remained while the sexton was performing his duty, as though they were riveted to the spot.

---

#### POLSTEAD CHURCH

The church of Polstead is remarkable for its rural simplicity, combined with evident marks of antiquity. It stands on the brow of an eminence in the park belonging to Polstead Hall, the residence of Mrs. Mary Ann Cooke. The structure is surrounded by an alcove of trees of varied height and foliage, and its spire, when seen at a distance, as it were pointing to heaven, forms a pleasing and picturesque appearance. The building is by no means large, but is remarkable for the neat manner in which it is fitted up. The church contains a number of escutcheons belonging to the Brand family, through whom the Hall and extensive manor descended to the present occupiers.

Near the altar-piece is a neat marble monument, bearing the effigies of a man and his infant son, in a kneeling position, the former looking at a book, and the latter at a human skull he holds in his hand.





Maria Marten's Grave.



JOHN BAALHAM, PARISH CLERK.



POLSTEAD CHURCH.





The following is the inscription, which appears rather ambiguous :—

“ Here lieth the body of  
Jacob Brand, Gentleman,  
And of his youngest son  
Benjamin Brand,  
Who died y<sup>e</sup> 3d of Decr.  
1630.”

*Jacob*  
*Salmon*

There are also monuments of Dr. Bakehouse, formerly archdeacon of Canterbury, and several other clergymen who have been incumbents of this valuable living.

The churchyard is generally kept locked, to prevent its becoming the resort of the idle and the dissolute, as is too often the case in villages. This regulation, we are given to understand, emanates from the worthy clergyman, who not only piques himself upon the neatness of the temple in which he proclaims the glad tidings of salvation, and also of the adjacent cemetery for the dead, but declares that, in his estimation, the graves of the poor ought to be held as sacred as those of the rich.

Not far from the grave of Maria Marten is the burial-place of the CORDERS ; and the number of green hillocks lately raised show what devastation death has made in that ill-fated family, within the space of a very short period. We subjoin the epitaph from the gravestone of Corder's father :—

“ John Corder, late of this Parish, Farmer, Died the 11th of December, 1825, aged 63.”

“ Farewell, vain world, I've seen enough of thee,  
And now am careless what thou say'st of me ;  
Thy smiles I court not, nor thy frowns I fear,  
My race is run, my head is quiet here.  
What faults you see in me take care to shun,  
Look well at home, enough there's to be done \*.”

\* By the side of the sire lie the mortal remains of those of his sons, who have been prematurely removed from the world since the former quitted it.



The following is the epitaph on the memorial stone of Mr. Baalham, the father of the present parish clerk, a person with whom the reader will become familiar, as he was one of those who removed the remains of Maria Marten from the grave in the Red Barn, previous to the Coroner's Inquest.

“ In memory of John Baalham, who departed this life on the  
8th day of May, 1818, aged 70.”

“ Oh, Reader, pause ! art thou prepared to see  
Thy God this day, if he should summon thee ?  
Think on this question with a contrite heart,  
Before that hour when soul and body part,  
Then shall thy soul in bliss for ever live,  
Bless'd with pure joys which God, thro' Christ, will give.”

We have already remarked that the church is a simple structure, but independent of the monument erected in it, two hundred years ago, it bears other evident marks of antiquity ; and we were informed, from indubitable authority, that the parochial archives contain documents which relate to the fourteenth century, and record the deaths of those whose sepulchral stones have crumbled to dust, or have otherwise undergone the demolition of the devastating hand of time, and thereby ceased to inform the present generation of the spot where “ patrician or plebeian once reposed their heads.”

Standing on the grassy hillock which covers the remains of poor Maria, the immolated victim to lust and cruelty, you can nearly discover the spot where she breathed her last—reflections irresistibly rush upon the mind which bring with them a pleasing melancholy—we are carried back by imagination a few years, when we behold her beautiful, sprightly, and *innocent*—we are led to consider the means by which she fell from the proud eminence she once occupied, and which were the primary causes of her disastrous end—and to exclaim, What havoc has been made in the world by the fell monster Sin !

## DISINTERMENT OF THE BODY.

After the remains of Maria Marten had been laid quietly in Polstead Churchyard upwards of five weeks, some circumstances transpired which led to a belief that a supposed defect in the chain of evidence might be supplied, and which had reference to the cause of her death. In consequence of this probability of new light being thrown on the subject, Mr. Wayman, the coroner, met several professional gentlemen at the Cock at Polstead, on the 3d of June, where they held a consultation as to the propriety of disinterring the body, and the result of their conference was, that it was agreed that the slumbering ashes of poor Maria should be again removed from their resting-place. This resolution was carried into effect with all possible secrecy at an early hour on the following morning.

This important investigation took place in consequence of the following circumstance. A person of the name of Glover was conversing with Mr. Chaplin about the murder, when the latter observed that he had no idea that Maria was struck by the small shot which appeared to have been discharged, and added, that Mr. Lorton, the surgeon, who examined the body in the first instance, was of opinion that a pistol ball had entered the neck of the deceased about the jugular, and that it took an oblique direction to the eye on the opposite side of the head. Glover said, that whether the unfortunate girl had been shot or not, it was quite evident that she had been stabbed in the side. No evidence to that effect having been adduced before the coroner, Mr. Chaplin inquired of Mr. Glover the reason why he made that assertion? He replied, that he had minutely examined the clothes in which the body was found, and he discovered that there was a wide cut in the stays and chemise of the deceased, which



appeared to have been done at the same time with a broad sharp instrument, which had evidently been stabbed into her body.

Mr. Chaplin went and examined the stays, &c., himself, and found the representation correct, whereupon he forthwith communicated the fact to Mr. Wayman the coroner.

The reason why these stabs in the apparel of the deceased were not discovered at the first investigation was, that the articles of dress were completely saturated with the putrid moisture which had flowed from the body while it lay in the Red Barn, and which being of a glutinous nature, prevented the cuts from being discerned.



The professional gentlemen who were present at the disinterment were Mr. Henry Chaplin, Surgeon, of Lavenham, Suffolk; Mr. Nairne, Surgeon of Bedham, Essex; and Mr. Bewick, assistant to Mr. Lorton of Boxford.

When the body was removed, it was placed by the side of the grave, and the gentlemen immediately commenced an examination of the left side, which they were led to do by the stabs they had observed in the stays and shift taken off the deceased when she was found on the 19th of April.

The result of their investigation left no doubt whatever that, whoever was the murderer, he had used, among other engines of destruction, a sharp instrument.

It should be observed, however, that before the exhumation took place, there prevailed a difference of opinion as to whether any beneficial result would arise from the re-examination of the body in its then putrid state, but the majority were for making the experiment. Upon an examination of the ribs on the left side of the body, it was discovered that a sharp instrument had passed between two of them, which had made an aperture about two inches and a quarter wide, and it was quite evident that

this wound was inflicted at the same time the stays and shift were cut, as the slits in them corresponded exactly. The medical gentlemen then took out the heart of the deceased, which, considering the length of time which had elapsed since death, was in a surprising state of preservation. Upon inspecting that part of the heart which lay next the ribs, they discovered a puncture opposite those which the instrument had separated, and evidently done, at the same time, with the same deadly weapon; and it was the opinion, that such an instrument as the small sword which had been ground and converted into a carving-knife by Mr. Offord, of Hadleigh, would have made such punctures as were apparent in the clothes, and such wounds as were inflicted upon the person of the deceased.

The two ribs through which the knife had passed were taken out by the medical gentlemen, and also the heart, which was put into spirits, and placed in the hands of Mr. Nairne, in order to be produced at the trial of the prisoner. A gentleman who has seen the stab in the side as exhibited by a mark between the ribs, and the puncture in the heart, describes the marks as follows——that in the ribs in shape and size thus ; and the puncture in the heart, which, it will be observed, is in the shape somewhat resembling a barley-corn, but rather longer, thus .

When the exhumation took place, excepting the medical gentlemen, there were present only Mr. Baalham, the parish-clerk, and some men to assist in raising the coffin from the grave, which, owing to the dryness and quality of the soil, was no very hard task. It took place between three and four o'clock in the morning, in order to prevent the idle intrusion of those who might, had the affair been known, interrupted the important investigation. The operations were performed by torch-light. To describe the spectacle, and the appalling peculi-



arities which this wasted remnant of mortality presented, were impossible:—we cast a veil over the scene, and consign the mutilated and disjointed remains again to the chamber of death, there to await the awful day when the trump of the Archangel shall sound, and the awful mandate shall be no sooner uttered, than obeyed by every being “once mortal.”

“ Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.”

---

#### TOMB TO THE MEMORY OF MARIA MARTEN.

Such was the feeling of commiseration for the unfortunate end of Maria Marten, and, notwithstanding her faults, such was the respect for her memory (for she possessed excellent qualities), that the respectable inhabitants of the village proposed to erect a tomb over her grave, as a memento to the present and future generations of her disastrous end, and the means by which she met it. Of course, the monumental stone was intended to be put up after the law had taken its course upon her base murderer.

No sooner was this intention made public, than numbers, not only in Polstead and its vicinity, signified their approbation, but several respectable persons, living at a distance, voluntarily expressed their readiness to contribute to the furtherance of such a laudable object.

The Rev. Mr. Whitmore, the rector of the parish, was waited upon, and informed of the intended project, when he not only expressed his disapprobation, but declared that he should exercise his authority to prevent its being carried into effect; adding that a stone should never be erected, so long as he had power to prevent it.

The reason assigned by the reverend divine for this refusal, and the exercise of his spiritual prerogative, is not a little extraordinary. He considers that, were a stone to be raised to commemorate the event, that it would have the effect of keeping it alive in the public mind, and continuing that public excitement which the catastrophe has already occasioned in the village and neighbourhood.

With the greatest possible respect for the reverend gentleman, and conscious, as we are, of his numerous virtues, we do not hesitate to state that his objections are futile and groundless, and, perhaps, if they are persevered in, may be productive of much negative evil. Were the grave of Maria Marten only to be covered with the green sod like those by which it is surrounded, and no monumental stone to inform the passenger of her untimely end, we ask, would that obliterate from the public mind the recollection of the event? Certainly not; for, in all probability, so long as Polstead remains a village, and the temple of God stands upon its foundation, the tragical event will be remembered. The children of the village, when asked, "What became of Maria Marten?" will reply, "She was murdered in the Red Barn." "Who murdered her?" "Bill Corder." There is no doubt but that, without the aid of the pen of the historian, it would be handed, as a traditionary legend, to generations yet unborn.

The natural propensity of persons, on their travels, to visit churchyards, is well known; and, perhaps, it is the first place to which a stranger or a traveller resorts, who has half an hour's leisure when he enters a town or village. It is in a place like this that mankind are reminded of a fact, which they are but too apt to forget, or at least reflect upon but superficially, that "*Mors omnibus communis*." The *Memento mori* on the tombstone, has a tendency to remind us of our own mortality, or the



end for which it was were designed, is not answered. In fine, we would ask, what evil could arise from an inscription, to shew that Maria Marten fell a victim to unbridled passions, and that "the way of transgressors is hard?"

---

#### THEATRICAL REPRESENTATIONS AT POLSTEAD FAIR.

When the sensation produced in the public mind by the dreadful event, the circumstantial particulars of which it is our province to narrate with fidelity and a strict regard to truth, is considered, it is much to be lamented, though not to be wondered at, that advantage should be taken of this excitement of feeling, by mercenary individuals, for the mere purpose of gain.

The annual fair was held at Polstead on the 16th and 17th of July, when, owing to the notoriety which the village has obtained in consequence of the late tragical event, it was visited by a great number of persons from distant parts ; and such was the influx, that the oldest inhabitant never remembered "the Cherry Fair" to have been so numerously attended.

Among other amusements there were a number of shows, and in two of these there were exhibited theatrical representations of "THE LATE MURDER OF MARIA MARTEN," which of course attracted considerable attention, and insured to the proprietors a rich harvest.

In one of these exhibitions, there was the scene in "the RED BARN," where the mutilated body was lying on a door on the floor, surrounded by the coroner and the gentlemen of the jury, as they appeared on Sunday the 20th of April, the day after the fatal discovery took place, and the representations were said to be extremely correct. This ill-





BURY COAL.



H. Cordw

timed spectacle was placed for public view within trumpet-sound of the dwelling of the venerable, care-worn, and almost broken-hearted mother of the alleged perpetrator of the horrid deed, which was deemed extremely improper by the better-informed part of the inhabitants, and by some of them entirely condemned.

When the intention of the sordid proprietors was made known, it was said that Sir William Rowley would be applied to, to prevent the exhibition, but there was no magisterial interference on the subject. In the course of the day, however, the showmen received a message from Mrs. Corder, warning them of the consequences if they made an improper use of the name of her son; and the caution appeared to be attended to, but the public were as well acquainted with the innuendoes which were thrown out as though the real name had actually been used.

In addition to these exhibitions, there were ballad-singers with songs connected with the Polstead murder, where the name of Corder was unfairly introduced, considering that at the time he was awaiting his trial.

---

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WILLIAM CORDER AND FAMILY.

“ Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.”

It now becomes our duty to present to our readers a brief sketch of the life of William Corder, and to make a few observations relative to the truly unfortunate family of which he was an unworthy member.

The subject of our memoir was born at Polstead in the year 1803 (and was consequently two years younger than Maria Marten), and was the son of John and Mary Corder.



The father of the prisoner resided in the village of Polstead the whole of his life, and farmed three hundred acres of land, which it is said he managed in such a way as to benefit himself, and give satisfaction to his landlord. He was considered a respectable yeoman of the old school, and was not only industrious, but rigidly economical.

At the time when agricultural produce was at its highest price, a great number of the farmers found the influx of money so great, that many of them began to imitate their superiors as nearly as possible, and instead of continuing to improve the golden harvest by allowing good crops and high prices to give swiftness to the wheels of industry, they arose with the sound of the horn, mounted the prancing steed, and joined in the same chase with their noble landlords and country gentlemen. Old Mr. Corder used to censure such conduct, and observed frequently that ruin must eventually ensue from such pursuits, for, as sure as heaven, the landlords would raise their rents, and give a check to such an assumption at equality. "For my part," he used to say, "I think the best way is to lay up store against a rainy day." He adopted this plan, and at the time of his death had amassed considerable wealth.

It appears that Mr. Corder had eight children, two of whom died about thirteen years back, and at the time of his death (December 18th, 1825,) he left a widow and six surviving children, all grown up to maturity, viz., four sons and two daughters; the eldest daughter (Mary) having long been married to a respectable miller in the neighbourhood of Polstead, of the name of Boreham. The sons were all brought up to agricultural pursuits, and their names were John, Thomas, William, and James. Before we proceed further, we think it our duty to notice the dreadful havoc which death has lately made in this ill-fated family within the space

of two years. When Mr. Corder died, he left four sons, all strong and healthy, and either of them capable of managing the extensive farm, and becoming a staff and stay to the declining years of his widow; of this number, alas! only ONE was left to behold the year 1828, and he, at the commencement of that year, was committed to prison as a murderer.

At the death of his father, Thomas Corder, being the second eldest son, took upon himself the management of the farm; and, excepting his amour with Maria Marten, we have not heard anything to affect his moral character. He was extremely industrious, and appeared to walk in the steps of his father, and by his general demeanour he lived in esteem and with repute among his neighbours. His widowed mother did not long enjoy the benefit of his advice and his exertions; for only fourteen months after death had taken her husband, her son Thomas was prematurely and accidentally torn away by that dread foe.

The melancholy event to which we allude took place on the 23d of February, 1827, it being his birthday, in the following manner. Within sight of the house of Mrs. Corder is a large fish-pond, which, at the time of the death of this unfortunate young man, was frozen over. Having a desire to speak to Mr. Chaplin, who was on the opposite side, he attempted to cross over for that purpose; but, when he got near the middle of the pond, the ice gave way, and he sunk to rise no more. Mr. Chaplin immediately gave the alarm, and instant attempts were made to discover the body, but which proved abortive for half an hour, when it was brought to the surface through the intrepidity of a young man, who nearly lost his own life by the effort. Having been so long immersed in the water, at such an inclement season of the year, all attempts at resuscitation were fruitless. Thus died this respect-



able young man, in the prime of his youth, and who, but a few minutes before, enjoyed excellent health, and was surrounded by wealth and prosperity. An inquest was held upon the body in the same room as that in which the inquest sat upon Maria Marten, when the verdict was "*Accidental Death*."—How different was that recorded in reference to the former mistress of the deceased!

An event so disastrous as this could not fail to be heart-rending to the aged mother, and the more especially as her sons James and John, at the time it happened, were in a very declining state of health, and since that period she has had to follow them also to the tomb. Who can contemplate a succession of bereavements like these, and not have the kindly feelings of his nature directed toward the aged matron—a husband and three sons taken away by death, within the short space of eighteen months! Visitations so awful require no ordinary degree of fortitude to endure, even when youth, and health, and strength act as auxiliaries to our succour—how hard then to be borne by age and decrepitude! Well might she exclaim, in the bitterness of her soul, in the language of one of old, "I am bereaved of my children, and I am bereaved, and weep for them because they are not." Providences like these are designed for useful purposes, which are ~~not~~ answered unless they teach mankind that neither youth, nor health, nor riches, are securities against the approach of death: they exclaim, in language the most energetic, "Prepare to meet thy God," "for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh."

But was this venerable lady bereft of all her sons—out of the little circle which lately surrounded her domestic hearth and her table was there none left to console and comfort her during the short period of her care-worn life—no one to conduct her worldly affairs, and act the double part of husband and

child? Yes, she had one only son yet left—William Corder lived; but was he such an one as her necessities required—such an one as we have attempted to describe? Alas, no! look at the sequel, and then, reader, should Christian philanthropy reside in your breast,

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

WILLIAM CORDER, as we have already observed, was born in the year 1803, but of his infantine years we know nothing beyond the fact of his having been fostered and caressed by indulgent parents. At an early age, he was sent to the village school, where he was taught reading and writing, and the first rudiments of arithmetic; after which he was sent to an academy at Hadleigh, to finish his education, and his preceptor informed us, that the pupil was more apt to receive instruction than many of his school-fellows. It is difficult to account for the prejudices and animosities which often exist among school-boys; but with regard to Corder, it appears that, from some cause or other, he became an object of universal dislike.

We are told, that in his early days he betrayed an iniquitous disposition, and was not only guilty of a disregard of the eighth commandment,—“Thou shalt not steal,” but he moreover did not make it a part of his duty to consider truth inviolable. If these were his failings, it is no wonder that he should have forfeited the good opinion of his play-mates, and have frequently become the butt of their ridicule.

Being possessed of a considerable share of what is called low-cunning, he knew well by what means to shift his own faults upon the backs of others; and owing to this craft he was, by his schoolfellows, nicknamed *Foxey*, an appellation, by which he was, in after-life, sometimes designated; but he was generally called, in Polstead, by the name of *Bill*



*Corder*, even down to the time of his apprehension for the murder of Maria Marten.

Whether the venial faults of his childhood were afterwards inconsiderately indulged, we are not aware : but this fact is indisputable,—that when they are so, they sometimes lead to the commission of the greatest crimes which ever disgraced the history of mankind—even the foul crime of murder.

It is not easy upon what principle to account for the propensity we behold in some youths to petty depredations, indeed it is a problem not easy to be solved ; but wherever those indications appear, they generally show themselves in after-life ; they “grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength.\*”

For several years William assisted his other brothers in their agricultural pursuits, and there was nothing apparently remarkable in his propensities and character. He was naturally of a churlish temper, and was not deemed so liberal in his disposition as some of his brothers.

William Corder was about five feet four inches in height, and of slender make, and had a remarkable inclination to stoop forward in his walk, and generally held the lappel or breast of his coat in his left hand, when doing so. His complexion was fair, but not sickly ; his face very much freckled, and his eyes extremely weak, so much so, that he was often obliged to put a book very near them, in order to read its contents. Notwithstanding this defect in the visual organ, he was nevertheless esteemed a most excellent shot, and could bring down the object he aimed at when at a distance with great precision. With regard to his manners, they were repulsive, especially to a stranger ; and when-

\* A French writer, when speaking of the early propensities and great facility with which some persons commit crime, emphatically observes, “There are some men who appear absolutely to be born hanged.”

ever he entered into conversation, even with those who knew him intimately, he seldom expressed himself with frankness, but there generally appeared a mental reservation.

There appeared also, among other traits in his character, an unconquerable desire to pry into the affairs of other persons, and in this he was at times an admirable tactician ; but to do him justice, we have reason to believe that he did not thirst after the acquirement of this species of information for the purpose of engendering strife among his neighbours, but merely to satisfy the cravings of a little mind. If he could obtain information, of which his neighbours were ignorant, he boasted of being the repository of the secret, and if pressed to divulge it he almost uniformly refused ; in fact, he appears to have acted like a miser—" Got all he could, and kept all he got."

From some causes or other, but perhaps as we proceed they will be easily conjectured, Corder did not appear to be a favourite with his father and the family, which perhaps was owing to his having been particularly noticed by his mother, who was very much attached to him. He knew that he was slighted, and that his father was not so liberal in his supplies to him as to his other children ; but to counterbalance this deficiency, he always had a fond mother to look up to, and he might have refrained from those petty frauds upon his father in which he was frequently detected, and which when discovered did not, of course, place him in a more favourable point of view in his father's estimation.

On one occasion he went to Mr. \* \* \* \* with his father's compliments, and requested the loan of a ten pound note, which was given to him without hesitation, or any suspicion of fraud. After a lapse of some time, the gentleman who advanced the money met with the elder Corder, and reminded him of



the circumstance. The old gentleman appeared much surprised, and denied that he had occasion to require such a favour, or that he ever commissioned William to ask for it. The old gentleman, upon repaying the money, observed, that he did not know what to do with the boy, but if he would get money and spend it, he would take care that a deduction should be made at a future day, for the other children should not be injured by the extravagance of one.

This being the first offence of any magnitude, in relation to pecuniary matters, in which his father, had detected him, he rebuked him severely, and, upon pain of his utter displeasure, cautioned him against its recurrence. This proper chastisement appears to have had but little effect, for he still continued his depredations upon his father's property, and squandered the proceeds among females with whom he became acquainted, as he does not appear to have been extravagant in other respects.

There was one excellent trait in the character of Corder, and which, one would have thought, might have operated in a great degree to shield him from the obloquy which has justly fallen upon him. He was proverbial for his sobriety, and we believe that he scarcely, if ever, was seen in a state of intoxication. It is not to be understood that the penury of his father entirely deprived him of the advantages which are generally allowed to the son of a farmer, for he was permitted to have a small portion of live stock, which he might either keep or sell, for his own exclusive benefit.

On one occasion, however, (whether from *short-sightedness* or innate depravity, we will not say) he made a mistake, by selling several pigs of his father's as his own. They were disposed of to a person of the name of Baalham, (not the parish-clerk before named,) to whom, in the preceding week, Corder had sold other swine which actually

belonged to him. When old Corder discovered the fact, he went to the purchaser and made a peremptory demand of the pigs, as his property, and declared that Baalham had purchased them in his own wrong. The latter, however, resolutely refused to comply, unless the money he had paid was previously refunded.

Mr. Corder then inquired what representation William made when he sold the pigs? Baalham said, that Corder told him that his father would not allow him to keep them any longer. This, of course, was a palpable falsehood. It was admitted, on all hands, that the pigs were sold at a fair price, and that no suspicion attached to the purchaser. The father accordingly paid the money, and they were once more restored to his farm-yard.

In consequence of these and similar offences, his father determined that William should quit the paternal roof, and it was resolved that he should be sent to sea, with a view to break off the connexions which he had formed. The old gentleman set a negociation on foot to effect his purpose, and a friend attempted to obtain a respectable situation in the merchant service, or on board an Indiaman, and the young man left his native village, in accordance with his father's plan, to enter upon it; but, when he arrived in London, it was completely frustrated, inasmuch as no commander would receive him in their service, on account of the defect in his eyes. Other plans were then resorted to for the purpose of expatriating him for a time, but, from some cause or other, they proved abortive, and he soon returned again into the bosom of his family.

Were there any additional proof wanting to show how low, grovelling, and depraved was the mind of Corder, the following circumstance alone were sufficient. At Polstead, there resided a man of the name of Samuel Smith, *alias* Cooper, but commonly called and known by the appellation of *Beauty*



*Smith*, a notorious thief, who had been twice transported within the last sixteen years, for pig-stealing, and several times imprisoned for minor offences. This desperado returned home a short time before the sudden disappearance of Maria Marten, to the great dismay of the neighbourhood. Singular as it may appear, William Corder not only became his occasional associate, but absolutely went with *Smith* one night, and stole a pig belonging to a poor man in the employment of Mr. Hoy, a gentleman living at Stoke, a village in the neighbourhood, which *Smith* acknowledged Corder killed.

So notorious was the character of “*Beauty Smith*,” that, if any depredation had been committed in the vicinity of his dwelling, suspicion was almost sure to fall upon him, as it did in this case, and not unjustly, for he afterwards confessed the fact, but was never tried for it, owing to a circumstance which we shall hereafter explain.

A short time after this robbery, Ayers, an active constable, living at Boxford, met *Smith*, when he had a conversation with him about the pig, but not having a warrant, he did not apprehend him. Knowing that Corder had been in the company of *Smith* about the time, if not on the very evening that the pig was taken away, Ayers accosted him, saying, “So, *Bill Corder* was in the pig concern with you,” (Ayers was only what is called sifting,) when he admitted the fact, and added, “I’ll be d—d if he (*Corder*) will not be hung some of these days.”

At this time a warrant was out against *Smith* for this and other robberies, and, shortly after, Ayers apprehended him for stealing some asses in the county of Essex, and thereupon he was committed to Colchester gaol. At the next assizes he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to be transported for life. In consequence of this conviction he was never tried upon the charge of pig-stealing, to

which we have alluded, in which Corder appears to have been an accomplice.

During the time he was in Chelmsford gaol, he frequently alluded to Corder, of whom he spoke in terms of disrespect ; and gave it at his opinion that he would be hanged one day or the other ; but his allusions were considered vague and ambiguous.

After *Corder* was apprehended on the charge of murder, the expressions used by *Beauty Smith*, in reference to him, got to the ear of *Lea*, the officer of Lambeth-street Police-office, who informed the magistrates that he heard there was a convict on board the hulks, at Portsmouth, who, while in Chelmsford gaol, had frequently been heard to say that he could hang Corder any day he pleased.—[*Smith* qualified his expression to *Ayers*, by saying that Corder *would be* hanged some of these days.]

*Mr. Wyatt*, the *Rev. Mr. Matthias*, and the other sitting magistrates, upon hearing this, conferred together as to whether it would not be better to make application to have *Smith* detained in this country until after Corder's trial, lest the latter should then set up a defence that *Smith* was the actual murderer ; for it was to this horrid transaction that the worthy magistrates thought the latter had reference, when he uttered the words attributed to him.

The result of the magisterial conference was, that they despatched a letter to *John Wayman, Esq.*, the coroner, stating their views on the subject, and at the same time suggesting whether it would not be better for him, or the parochial officers of *Polstead*, to set an immediate inquiry on foot, and if it should be requisite, that they should make an immediate application to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the subject.

The parish officers, in consequence of this intimation, addressed a letter to the Captain of the



transport in which Smith was confined, waiting his expatriation to Van Diemen's Land, and to which they received a reply, the purport of which was that Smith disclaimed all personal knowledge of Maria Marten ; that he had never known or heard of her being murdered ; and that the expressions used by him were in allusion to the pig-stealing affair, and other matters of a similar description, in which Corder and himself had been engaged.

We now come to that important part of the life of Corder, when he first began to pay his suit to Maria Marten, which ultimately led to a connexion, which was only dissolved by her sudden and extraordinary death, a death which excited public feelings of commiseration for her unhappy end, and which entailed universal opprobrium on her dastardly but sanguinary murderer. This intimacy commenced about March, 1826, but matters were managed with so much secrecy, that, until she became pregnant, Maria's family were in complete ignorance of it ; but after this discovery was made, Corder became a constant visiter at the cottage.

This epoch is, of all others, the most remarkable in the life of Corder, and will be the cause of his name being handed down to posterity written in letters of *blood*.

This young man appears to have indulged an ungovernable propensity for forming intimate connexions with females, notwithstanding which he was, in general, extremely cautious in his amours, in order to prevent discoveries. When, however, the secret was disclosed, he used to boast of the favours with which he had been indulged, with a criminal flippancy.

With regard to Maria Marten, however, he appears to have made the affair no secret after a certain period, inasmuch as he not only called at her house several times every day, but he used to take rural walks with her, and hand her about the vil-

lage, as her acknowledged lover. About the time that the dalliance subsisted between these parties, James and John, the two brothers of Corder, were afflicted with a deep-rooted consumption, whereof they shortly died.\*

The management of his mother's extensive farm now devolved on him, and he had a fine opportunity of retrieving his character from those stigmas with which his previous conduct had caused it to be sullied; and it is but just to state that, for some months, he was very assiduous in attending to his mother's interests, and many persons indulged a hope that he would have set himself right again in the opinion of the world.

In the autumn of 1827, however, he affected to

\* Both the unfortunate brothers of Corder died after the time Maria Marten went away with him. The following circumstance has been disclosed to us, which, although it has not been adduced in the previous evidence, appears to be important. We give it as we received it, and the reader will draw his own conclusions.

Mrs. Marten, the step-mother, being at the funeral of James Corder, which happened long after Maria's departure from her natal spot, observed, that Corder had got the umbrella with him which she took from home on that unhappy day, and, on her return home, she mentioned the fact to her husband, as she did also to the prisoner on the following day. On telling him what she had perceived, he denied the fact, and said the umbrella belonged to Mr. Pryke, of Stoke, but admitted that it was very much like Maria's. From some cause or other, but most likely fearful of a further inquiry, as Mr. Pryke was known to the Marten family, Corder called the next day, and contradicted his former statement, and said, that he had visited Maria *a few days before*, (this was seven weeks after the 18th of May,) and, in consequence of its raining when he came away, he borrowed her umbrella! The umbrella has never since been seen or heard of, as we can ascertain.

There is another fact which is intimately connected with this catastrophe, viz. that, on the day Maria left home, she took with her seven or eight pounds in notes and sovereigns, observing that perhaps Corder, to whom she was going to be married the next day, might be short of money. She added that, if he kept her from home as long as he had intimated, she would send some cash to her father for the support of her child.



be very ill, and held out that he feared that he was doomed to follow his brothers to the tomb ; but it is now the opinion of those who then knew him, that it was the sufferings of the mind, arising from the admonitions of conscience, which gave rise to his affliction, rather than any physical cause.

At length, he determined to go to a watering place for the benefit of his health, and, on the 29th of September, he left Polstead for that purpose. Among the singular facts connected with the transaction in which Corder has been so prominent a character, there was one circumstance which, from the first discovery of it, created a good deal of suspicion in the minds of the public. We allude to the fact of his uniformly keeping the key of the Red Barn in his own custody, which he had never done previous to the 1st of May, 1827.

In this part of our narrative we shall omit further mention of the awful scene which has been displayed in that building, and notice the character and conduct of Corder between the time when the catastrophe is supposed to have happened, until he left Polstead in September.

The inhabitants of the village were divided in opinion as to the destiny of Maria, but we believe that it never entered into the mind of any one, during the above interval, that a foul murder had been committed. Corder had frequent interviews with her father and family, and delivered messages to them which he pretended to have come from Maria, whom he always pretended was in good health, but represented that she was incapable of writing in consequence of a lame hand. At other times he wrote letters to Thomas Marten in reference to her ; for he had so managed it, that any communication sent from Polstead fell into his hands.

Corder was frequently rallied in regard to the fugitive Maria ; and when this was the case, he generally held out that he knew where she was, and

on one occasion he offered a bet while standing within view of the Red Barn, that he had made her his wife, but upon the challenge being accepted, he declared that he would not wager on the subject.

In his frequent visits to the Marten family he always allayed their fears, and abated their surprise by the plausible tale he told of Maria's health and happiness, and never failed to assure her father that he would make her his wife at Michaelmas, which he could not prudently do before, as he had to superintend the ingathering of his mother's harvest: this appeared to be a substantial reason, and had the effect, in a great degree, of satisfying old Marten, to whom he always made the most solemn assurances that he would act honourably, and fulfil his engagements.

Previous to his leaving Polstead, some arrangements were set on foot relative to the estate and effects of his late father, to whose will the two elder sons (since deceased) were executors originally, the testator having also made his widow executrix and administratrix; but owing to the death of those young men, the trusts of the will, as connected with the property, devolved, in some degree, upon a gentleman not connected with the family by consanguinity. Among other property, was a copyhold estate of considerable value, which we understand was proposed to be valued, and that William should receive it on account of his patrimony: this, however, he declined to accept, alleging that he did not wish to be saddled with a copyhold estate.

In consequence of this refusal, the estate was put up by public auction, and purchased by Sir William Rowley, M.P., for 1250*l.*, and on account of the terms in the charter of grant, the Corder family had to take it up again from the lord in whom the manorial right was vested.

Mr. Corder, the father, did not make his will until within a few hours of his death, and he ap-



pears to have been swayed by motives of equity, inasmuch that his children were to receive share and share alike, a controlling power being reserved for the widow during the term of her life. In consequence of three of the family being suddenly and prematurely taken away by death, the fortune of the three survivors, of course, became doubled, and as the property was very considerable, William Corder might have considered himself a rich man ; and he was justified in making the remark which he did to Lea, the officer, on his way to prison,—“ I have had excellent opportunities, and might have done as well as any young man in the county of Suffolk.”

Before he left Suffolk, he took care to collect a considerable sum (some say upwards of 400*l.*) which he kept on account, and, of course, with a view of its being deducted from his fortune. With this property, it appears, he went, first, to a watering place, in the Isle of Wight, which gave rise to another incident, of an extraordinary nature, and which will form another melancholy feature in this mysterious history.

During the early part of the time, after he left Polstead, the prisoner wrote several letters to Maria's father, in which he uniformly described her as being well, but some reason or other, and often not a very plausible one, was given why she did not write herself. It should be observed, by the way, that the letters were never dated from the places where the prisoner resided, and old Marten was instructed at what place he was to address him (Corder) or his daughter. Thus did this subtle, scheming villain effectually lull suspicion month after month ; and it should be observed, that the girl's father was enjoined to inviolable secrecy, under the pretext that he did not wish his family and friends to know the place of his retreat.

At a late period of the autumn, an unusual time

had elapsed, and no letter had been received at the Marten Cottage ; in consequence of which the old man was induced to despatch one to his daughter, as he vainly supposed, couched in the language of surprise at her silence, which amounted almost to a contempt, and also of remonstrance for the apparent neglect of her little son, Thomas Henry, from whom his natural father had, for some time, withdrawn his support, in consequence, as it was alleged, of the umbrage he had taken at Maria's conduct.

Over that conduct, whether perfidious or not, the little infant could not have had any controlling power, and ought not to have suffered in consequence ; and we are bound to state, that upon reflection his father took the same view of the subject, and, much to his honour, he made up every deficiency and ample provision for the future support of this truly unfortunate child. When the letter was despatched, from the Cottage, to which we have just alluded, no such arrangement had taken place ; and, therefore, to awaken Maria to a sense of her duty, her father informed her that it was impossible for him to maintain the child ; and unless some pecuniary supplies were transmitted, he should be under the necessity of applying to the parish for assistance, which would be very unpleasant to all parties.

This letter was directed to a place pursuant to the last information, and was in due course received by Corder ; the contents whereof appear to have created some alarm in his mind, as he no doubt thought, that were parochial relief applied for, the officers would doubtless endeavour to find out the mother of the child, to enable them to obtain an order of affiliation, or, if she had been married to Corder, as many now began to conjecture, to procure from him an indemnity for its support. Corder well knew that if this plan was adopted, the search after Maria would be fruitless, and that it could



not ultimately fail of bringing his name into question, yea, and might moreover be the cause of developing that mystery of which he had so long been the master-key.

In this dilemma it required all his subtlety and ingenuity to be brought into play, and the plan which he adopted was as follows :—Corder wrote a letter in his own name, in which he inclosed a sovereign on account of the child, accompanied by a printed paper of no particular import. The letter contained an order for the paper alluded to, to be put in an envelope directed to him at “The Bull Inn, Aldgate,” which would be a proof that the money had been received, and prevent the necessity of any written communication from old Marten.

It is supposed that this scheme was resorted to, to prevent any further remonstrance, or as a caution, lest the answer should afterwards fall into improper hands—this appears to have been the last letter written to this ill-fated family, who were hereafter kept in doubt and darkness respecting the hapless girl who had for so many years cheered the humble cottage by her presence and vivacity.

In this state of uncertainty things remained, until, in consequence of the ominous dreams of his wife, Mr. Marten was induced to search in the Red Barn, or, as some have designated it, the POLSTEAD GOLGOTHA, when he found the mangled remains of his darling child, a discovery which led to the apprehension of Corder, and his justly deserved punishment.

During the interval between the departure of Maria under the *protection* of Corder, his unfortunate mother laboured under the impression that she was living under it, or in plain terms, that her son had provided an asylum for her, and kept her as his mistress. With the natural anxiety of a mother, situated as she unfortunately was, she became exceedingly anxious that her only son should break off a connection which appeared so disreputable,

and conduct himself in future in a manner more becoming his station in society. The wretched woman at length communicated her wishes to Mr. Chaplin, a respectable neighbour, observing, that William would attend to his advice and remonstrance in preference to any person she knew. Mr. Chaplin cheerfully engaged to further her wishes in this regard, and invited Corder to his house, where they had some private discourse for several hours. Without informing him that the meeting took place at his mother's request, Mr. Chaplin remonstrated with him on the impropriety of keeping up such a connection as that which he had formed, and observed, that however accomplished Maria Marten might be in his estimation, her character was of that sullied description, that he (Corder) could never expect to be received by his family and friends with respect if he made her his wife. He further represented that his own respectability hereafter, and the comfort of an aged mother, depended in a great degree upon the use he made of the advice which was given from the purest of motives, but at the same time he (Mr. Chaplin) recommended that he should behave respectfully, and in a manly way towards the young woman, and settle something handsome upon her, so as to prevent complaint. To this wholesome advice Corder listened with attention, and expressed his gratitude to the gentleman who tendered it; but when pressed as to whether he would attend to it, so as to profit by it, he pretended to have a great regard for Maria, (for subsequent developments have proved it could only be pretence,) but promised to drop the acquaintance with her shortly.

Mr. Chaplin rejoined, that if the advice he had given was worthy of consideration, it could not be attended to too early—to this Corder made no reply, nor did he in the course of this conversation make any disclosure as to where she resided. Shortly after this interview, the arch hypocrite told



Gardner, his most intimate friend, of the fatherly advice which he had received from Mr. Chaplin, when Gardner recommended him by all means to attend to it.

It appears that while Corder was at the watering place (Seaforth), in the autumn of last year, he formed an accidental acquaintance with a young lady of the name of Moore, but we are informed that at that time no arrangement was made to continue it by epistolary correspondence, nor was any overture made on his part with a view to obtain the hand of the lady in marriage. Not many weeks elapsed after they parted, before Corder went into a pastrycook's shop, in Fleet-street, to take some refreshment, when he met with Miss Moore. The singularity of this accidental meeting excited the surprise of both parties, and led to a long conversation; but, according to the statement given by the lady's mother, to Lea the officer, the former acquaintance was not intimately renewed. Shortly after this interview, Corder had recourse to the frequently practised, but unmanly and detestable scheme of advertising for a wife, by paying for an insertion in a popular morning paper.

In this advertisement, he requested that letters in reply should be addressed to "Mr. F., Stationer, Cheapside, London." Whether this was a quixotic and pre-concerted plan between the parties, we will not pretend to state, although we know many persons indulge that opinion; the fact, was that Miss Moore answered the advertisement, and an interview took place in consequence, which shortly led to a fatal marriage, for within a few days afterwards Corder led the lady to the hymeneal altar, at the church of St. Andrew's, Holborn, where, in the presence of her brother, he plighted his vows to "love and cherish her until death should them part!" We have been favoured

with an anecdote relative to this short courtship, which leads us to believe that this unfortunate young lady was so deeply enamoured of this advertising swain, that she did not consult her brother, who was her natural guardian, upon the propriety of forming that close connection which was, in all probability, to fix her destiny through life. At this period the lady and her mother resided at No. 6, Gray's-inn Terrace, at which place Mr. Moore, her brother, who is a respectable working jeweller, had his workshop, and used to take his meals. The following circumstance informed him of the love-affair between his sister and Corder:—One day, after he had dined, he went into the kitchen and saw a dinner providing for three persons, which was to be ready for the table at four o'clock. This discovery led him to inquire who the party was that was about to pay a visit, when the answer was, “A friend, who is coming to see your sister;” and this intelligence was accompanied with a solicitation that he would become one of the party. This *favour*, however, he declined, and expressed his disapprobation that he had not been previously consulted.

In the evening, Mr. Moore joined the party, when Corder entered into familiar conversation with him, and did not attempt to conceal the purport of his visit, and to detail the manner in which he first became acquainted with the lady, and also the singular circumstance which had brought them into a closer contact, viz. the advertisement before alluded to.

Mr. Moore naturally expressed his surprise at this recital, and in the exercise of the prudent caution which became a brother, made inquiries as to who and what the person was, who had so suddenly and by such extraordinary means ingratiated himself into the favour of his sister; to all of which, we



believe, Corder gave the answer of truth, so far, at least, as regarded his family and property.

The statement made by Corder, with great apparent candour, in some degree removed the scruples of Mr. Moore, who nevertheless urged the propriety of his sister not being precipitate in her engagements, as well as the necessity there was, both for her own sake and the satisfaction of her family, that inquiries should be set on foot to ascertain whether the representations made were correct or otherwise. In reply to these very sensible remarks, the lady said, "that she was fully satisfied in her own mind, and urged, that as she was her own mistress, she should use her own discretion, and in defiance of anything her brother might urge to the contrary, she should marry him on the morrow." In this respect she was as good as her word, and the marriage was solemnized at the church already mentioned.

About this time a change took place in the establishment, and with the exception of Mr. Moore, the family removed to Grove House, Ealing-lane, Brentford, where Mrs. Corder opened a school for the reception of young ladies; and we have heard that her education and abilities eminently qualified her to conduct such an establishment.\* At this place, it would seem, Corder lived in seclusion, for, with the exception of the affair connected with the check for ninety-three pounds, and the Manningtree

\* Soon after the apprehension of her husband, a provincial paper sent forth a paragraph, which stated, that Mrs. Corder had recovered 500*l.* damages of a gentleman, in an action brought by her for a breach of promise of marriage; but there was no foundation whatever for this assertion, which she contradicted in a spirited letter, written to the editor of the offending journal. Had the statement been correct, we conceive it could not have retracted an *iota* from the excellent character which she is said to have maintained.

Bank, we hear but little of him down to the time of his apprehension for murder, an event which, of course, has plunged the family of the lady in the greatest distress, and, when too late, awakened her to a sense of the impropriety of turning a deaf ear to the excellent advice of her brother.

If this disastrous event had not taken place, we have a right to presume that Corder would not have continued long on amicable terms with his new relations, and the following fact warrants that presumption: the lease of the premises, in the vicinity of Gray's Inn, belonged to Mr. Moore, the brother of Mrs. Corder; but whether it was lodged in Corder's hands, for any specific purpose, does not appear; but the fact was, that he advertised it for sale in the *Times* newspaper, and it was only from an accidental conversation with a friend that Mr. Moore discovered the fraud intended to be committed, and prevented the clandestine negotiation.

It appears, by the statement of Mrs. Corder's mother, that, while the prisoner was residing at Grove House, he manifested a restlessness of disposition at times which was wholly unaccountable; and sometimes, in his sleep, his deep moanings, and incomprehensible expressions, were very alarming to the boarders in the house. This circumstance would not have created any surprise, had the sanguinary and eventful history of the last few months of his life been known, and his general character duly appreciated.

There is every reason to believe that Corder was caressed and idolized by his unsuspecting wife. It is no wonder, therefore, that to have him torn from her, under any circumstances, would have been distressing in the extreme. When he was first apprehended, she was informed, and believed, that it



was only upon a charge of bigamy, and this impression she indulged until it was impossible any longer to conceal the dreadful reality.

No sooner had she learned the turpitude of the crime with which her husband stood charged, than she repelled the idea that "Mr. Corder could by possibility be guilty of such a horrid offence." Such continued the affection of this infatuated and misguided, we will not say rash, young woman, that she followed him to Bury, abandoning all her worldly prospects, by consigning her establishment to the management of others. During the period of his apprehension to the day of his trial, she paid him daily visits, and administered such comfort and consolation as was within her power, excepting at such times as she went to London to give instructions to Mr. Humphreys, the attorney, or when on a visit to her unhappy mother-in-law, at Polstead.

In order to show the heartlessness and depravity of the miscreant whose crimes we are narrating, we subjoin a copy of a letter, written by him a few months after the sanguinary murder, in which he circumstantially details the progress of an impudent intrigue with a female, upon whom he forced his company. It was addressed by Corder to Mr. Gardner, a person with whom he had been upon terms of strict intimacy, and who was, therefore, called as a witness on the trial, to prove the prisoner's hand-writing. This letter was written closely, and then transversely.

A small portion of the letter having been lost, there is a want of connexion in two places, but the reader will be able to supply the defect when he studies the context. It is *verbatim et literatim*, with all its orthographical defects, and want of periods to the sentences.

*London, Oct. 18th, 1827.*

*Bull Inn, Leadenhall Street.*

My Dearest friend

For such I always experienced from you and hope y<sup>r</sup> Friendship will still continue for I have many times relieved a troubled mind by relating to you my disgraceful transactions, but I think I am doomed to disasters and give sorrow to those, whose happiness I ought to promote, I shou'd have wrote to you before and am truly asham'd of my Negligence, but in real truth I have made no stay at any place, continual moving from one place to another, therefore was not able to give you any proper address, which is the only cause of my inattention toward a highly respected Friend hoping that will plead my pardon, and I will now lay before you a full account of my long journey if time will permit, it was on the 18th ult that I left Polstead and reach'd London the same day about 4 Oclock when after taking some refreshment I call upon Mr Cook a Gentleman you have heard me speak of, to whom I stated my indisposition and intention in going to Hastings as recommended by Mr Livings he advised me to go to Portsmouth as he had an acquaintance *their* who wou'd instruct me to get Lodgings and provisions on the Cheapest terms, well I stay'd in Town three days and then went on to Portsmouth taking his advice, which was on the Sunday being a particular fine Morning I took a place on the outside of the Coach by a most charming innocent and lovely female. I will relate to you the heads of our conversation and what pleasure I enjoyed in her sweet attractive company hoping all will sink within y<sup>r</sup> own breast, I began to converse with her the first moment I placed myself by her side, and very soon discover'd that she was a native of Yorks going to the Isle of Wight to see an only Brother who had done as myself brough shame and disgrace upon himself and had enter'd into the army, but I found his was brought on by inebriation, mine was by keeping low profligate society, she told me after a deal of conversation that he had wrote saying he was going to the Indies and she was terribly afraid he was already gone, and I likewise found she was very fearful of water, for getting intelligence by the Coachman that it was 12 miles over from Portsmouth to Cowes the nearest landing place to Alberny Barracks where her Brother was when he wrote, she said she had not the



least idea of its being so far, and every limb in her frame trembled with fear, I then offered her my service in accompanying her over, telling her I was as herself an entire stranger to the Country but was recommended to a Friend in Portsmouth wher I might learn necessary instructions the Idea of throwing herself under my protection was at first very disgusting particular going with me to this Friend Mr. P \* \* \* for that was the name however I paid great attention to her on the road and press'd her company much, she being in deep mourning I told her I would introduce her as my sister or some near relation to Mr. P \* \* \* I said the Idea of leaving her at Portsmouth without the least protector was indeed horrid all amongst stranger where she wou'd find everybody imposing upon her, and at last she consented but was afraid the Coachman shou'd notice it as he new that we was strangers to each other when we left London. however I gave the Coachman his fees for us both when we reach'd Portsmouth and we went on to Mr. P \* \* \*'s which was about 5 minutes walk leaving my luggage at the Coach Office the Lady's I took under my arm it was but little

when we reached the  
 I thought she would have droped for  
 as white as the wall, her feelings are  
 express'd I introduced her as my cousin  
 she could not speak one word and I was  
 we shou'd be discover'd however we experienced  
 great kindness from both Mr and Mrs P \* \* \*  
 was order'd for us imedately which  
 readily excepted after which we wa  
 to a Coffee house very near where I  
 a sitting room and two bed rooms and sent  
 to the office for my luggage our conversation that even-  
 ing was principally upon the  
 day's journey to Alberney Barracks  
 we went to bed about ten O clock agreeing to rise in the  
 morning time enough for the first Packet to the Isle of Wight,  
 which we learn'd out wou'd start at 8 O clock I shak'd  
 hands and we parted for the night I must cut short for I  
 find time is going, we went to the Barracks next day and  
 found her brother who was of course glad to see her but  
 surprised to see an entire stranger with her requesting to  
 know who I was and where I came from  
 but that we first, he asked her if  
 she was got was much astonish'd

knowing by her . . . . . than 21 years old  
 I ask'd him . . . . . to Newport for a  
 few hours which . . . . . from the Barracks  
 he then wished me to ask a the Captain of the Company,  
 which I did by telling him I was his Brother and came from  
 Yorks on purpose to see him, it was then about 11 O clock  
 and after some hesitation he granted him permission till 9  
 O clock that evening we then went on to Newport where we  
 continued till next day but her Brother left us that night and  
 return again in the morning for one hour when they parted  
 with greatest regret and we returned again to our Lodgings  
 in Portsmouth where she told she was in Mourning for her  
 Husband who she had lost about 10 months after been  
 married 1 year and 4 months and she had one child, but  
 left in very good circumstances, telling me if I thought proper  
 to go to Bradford at any time she wou'd return me the  
 kindness I had shown her, I requested her to stay with  
 me a few days which she did after writing to her Mother  
 telling her not to expect her home at the time she  
 appointed when she left Bradford she continued with me  
 till the following Saturday when we was both sorry to part,  
 but hoping to meet again one time or other, but God only  
 know whether we shall or not, I promised to write to her  
 but I have not yet stayed long enough at any place ; but will  
 the first opportunity, when I left her I travel'd the Island all  
 over which is well worth notice, O how I did wish for y<sup>r</sup>  
 company for their was romantic scenes that I am sure you  
 wou'd have been delighted, when I left the Island I went to  
 Southampton as pretty Town as I ever saw and well worth  
 a strangers notice, from their to Devonshire by the steamer  
 to Plymouth from their to Devenport where provisions are  
 very reasonable the finest Market for fish fowl and provisions  
 of every describtion I ever saw I left Devenport on  
 Monday last for this town and came through Exeter Salis-  
 bury and several smaller Towns the names I could not learn  
 being inside of the Coach with strangers to the road—I  
 reach'd London yesterday morning, having business to at-  
 tend to respecting our Family affairs, my Cough I have lost  
 thank God, which I think was from sea sickness's in a great  
 measure for I experienced a plenty of that, I must beg you  
 will excuse my scribble as in such haste and all mistakes  
 you will find a great plenty write by return of post or time  
 enough for Saturday post at least as I shall leave this town  
 on Sunday next let me know all news you can collect and  
 I shou'd be oblige to you to tell my Mother you have heard



from me and that I am in London but mind you be very careful for I know she is in great distress about me, but tell her I shall attend to the Letter she ought to have received on Tuesday last and direct to W. M. C. at the Bull Inn Leadenhall Street London No 6 the room I occupy.

I must now subscribe myself as it is now 3 O'clock and I must attend to other business, may every Blessing attend you God Bless you Adieu my Dearest Friend Adieu

I remain

With the greatest respect

Mr. G. Gardner

W CORDER

*Polstead Green*

Colchester  
py post.

*near Boxford*

*Suffolk*

Post paid

---

#### ARRIVAL OF THE JUDGES AT BURY ST. EDMUND'S.

The judges arrived in Bury about five o'clock on Saturday evening, the 2d of August, accompanied by the high sheriff, the under sheriff, and a number of javelin-men. Immediately on the cavalcade reaching the Angel Hill, the trumpeters sounded a flourish, and St. James's bells struck up a merry peal.

The learned judges immediately proceeded to the Crown Court, when the Chief Baron took his place at the Bench, Mr. Justice Holroyd standing at his left hand. The King's Commission and other documents were then read by the Clerk of the Assize; at the conclusion of which, the crier made proclamation that the court be adjourned until nine o'clock on Monday the 4th of August.

During the interval since the last assizes, the court has undergone a variety of alterations; but the learned Chief Baron pointed out others which he deemed necessary, and workmen were employed on

Monday morning, in conformity with his lordship's orders, which caused a delay of several hours, which his lordship employed in looking over the voluminous depositions in the case of Corder, and the other important cases which were to be tried before him during the assize.

---

### THE ASSIZE SERMON.

On the morning of Sunday, the 3d of August, the learned judges were conducted from their lodgings to St. Mary's Church, in the carriage of the high sheriff, attended by the javelin-men and other officers. The mayor, aldermen, and other members of the corporate body joined in the procession, each being attired in his robe of office, so that the procession had a very imposing effect. Before the judges arrived at the church, the spacious building was crowded to excess by persons of rank and respectability, and it was said that on no occasion had the church been so full. Among the worshippers so congregated was Mrs. Corder, the wife of the prisoner, who sat in a conspicuous part of the church, but she appeared to avoid the gaze of those who wished to recognize her, by covering her face with a large black lace veil which was appended to a moderate sized leghorn bonnet, the latter being fashionably adorned with green ribbon.

After the prayers and lessons of the day, as appointed by the formula of the church of England, had been read, Martin Luther's hymn on the Last Judgment was sung, accompanied by the organ, which was played in a masterly style, the musician frequently touching his chords so as to imitate a flourish of trumpets, which had a paralyzing effect



upon the multitude, and the judges themselves appeared to be affected by the solemn strains.

The Reverend Mr. Sheen, the chaplain to Hart Logan, Esq., the high sheriff, was then conducted to the pulpit, when he implored the divine blessing on behalf of the corporate body before him, and especially upon the vicegerents of the Sovereign, who were come to "execute justice and maintain truth" in the county of Suffolk.

The reverend chaplain then commenced what is called the Assize Sermon, and selected as the motto of his discourse, the 13th verse of the 2d chapter of the 1st Epistle by St. Peter, "*Subject yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.*"

In a suitable exordium, the divine observed, that when the Almighty became the king of his peculiar people Israel, he appointed his servant Moses to promulgate laws for their governance, which He himself had dictated. The code so delivered was accompanied with an authority and clothed with a power which could not be expected to attach to human laws, for those who transgressed them could not expect to escape. The Almighty declared that He would vindicate the honour of his laws, and He did so by visiting the offender sometimes by sickness or loss of property, and sometimes by the dreadful punishment of death. There was a great difference between the laws which emanated from God, and those laid down by human lawgivers, inasmuch as the former held out promises and rewards to those who should obey and keep them; the latter, on the contrary, held out a threat without a promise; but experience showed, that those who cheerfully and heartily, from a point of duty, obeyed the laws of God and man, and not from the sordid motives of prudence, had nevertheless a right to expect a blessing instead of a curse.

As the law of Moses was binding upon the children of Israel, so were the laws of states and kingdoms obligatory upon Christians. Questions, however, had been raised as to whether the professors of Christianity were bound to obey human laws, or at least as to how far they were binding ; in other words, whether they should be observed beyond what prudence and personal safety dictated. It was in consequence of scruples like these that laws, formed for the weal of the body politic, were oftentimes broken with impunity. The persons whom the apostle addressed in the text were early converts to Christianity, and appeared to believe that, having submitted to the law of Christ, they were freed from the necessity of obedience to human mandates. It had, however, been a doctrine promulgated by other apostles than St. Peter, that Christians were bound “ to be subject to higher powers, not only for law but for conscience’ sake.”

The Government under which we live was Christian and not Pagan, and our code of laws were modelled with a special regard to Christianity ; nevertheless they were not perfect in their nature and degree, as were those which were framed by the Supreme Being. If, however, the laws by which the subjects of this realm are governed were deemed faulty, or even obnoxious, they were capable of amendment. As subjects of a Christian king we were bound to respect them, as we should hereafter have to give an account before the tribunal of God. Obedience to the law was not a virtue, unless the persons obeying were swayed by virtuous motives and by a religious principle. Industry and courage were esteemed as virtues, but yet they were not so, unless they were accompanied by pure motives ; for, without those, as well might industry be attributed to a machine, and courage to a current, because they were kept in continual motion. A good subject would look to the spirit as well as to



the letter of the laws, and not attempt to defeat their intention, because he could break them with impunity, without fear of discovery. Independently of the criminal code, it was necessary that there should be a civil judicature, in order to protect the rights of the subject. With regard to property, it was sometimes a matter of doubt to whom it belonged, owing to complicated claims of two litigants, who might both be upright and conscientious men; from this cause it became necessary that the facts should be submitted and the mysteries unravelled before the judges of the earth.

Having shown that human laws were not only to be obeyed by all men, but were obligatory especially upon the Christian, the preacher observed that it was also a paramount duty to respect the due administration of them in the courts of justice.—There was something solemn, nay almost sacred, attending those edifices; and they should never, as was too often the case, become places for tumult and clamour—indeed, a court of justice might be termed hallowed ground. The judges who presided in them were the representatives of his Majesty, who is the vicerent of God on earth; so that, in point of fact, both the king and his judges were the representatives of the Deity. Persons who attend upon courts of justice should consider that, within their sacred walls, the character, property, and even the lives, of our fellow-creatures, were the subjects of serious consideration; and this solemn inquiry took place in a public manner.

In conclusion, the reverend divine remarked that, formerly, there were balls, assemblies, and other scenes of amusement frequented during the time the assizes were held; but what could be so anomalous to the solemnity of a judicial inquiry! It was a matter of congratulation, however, that this unchristian practice had been in a great measure, if not entirely, abandoned; at least, so far as related to the

ancient borough in which the congregation he addressed were assembled.

After making some further observations upon the analogy which existed between human laws and institutions and those of Supreme ordination, the preacher concluded his discourse, which appeared to have made a due impression on the minds of one of the most crowded and respectable congregations which ever assembled in the capacious and ancient edifice of St. Mary's.

---

SERMON IN THE CHAPEL OF BURY GAOL, PRE-  
PARATORY TO TRIAL.

On the Sunday before the business of the assize, the Reverend Mr. Stocking, the chaplain of the gaol, attended the prison at nine o'clock, he having other sacred duties to perform immediately afterwards. The prisoners were ushered into their several pews, which at the extremity are wide, but come almost to an apex to the centre of the chapel, and all together form a kind of fan, the expansion of which is observable by the clergyman and those who sit in the circle under him.

The reverend gentleman having read the Liturgy of the church of England in an impressive manner, ascended the pulpit, and preached a sermon applicable to the occasion.

He did not, however, as is the general custom, mention chapter and verse, but he said, as

“The legate of the skies,”

“The text from which I shall discourse is the sixth commandment, ‘Thou shalt do no murder!’”

Corder, who had taken his usual seat, and at-



tentively read and responded to the prayers, and acted as a man in a place of worship ought to do under any circumstances, raised his head from its habitual, if not natural, reclining position, when the divine mandate was addressed to the congregation, but it fell again almost immediately into his hand, and his visage was concealed during the greater part of the impressive discourse.

The reverend gentleman, in his exordium, observed, that he having carefully searched the annals of crime, he was unable to find a case where a criminal was ever charged with so diabolical a murder as one in the congregation stood charged with. [Corder here struck his forehead violently.]

Without attempting to make any further allusion to the circumstance, he would dilate upon what the Almighty had promulgated in reference to that crime. The extent of the command went beyond the dreadful act of a man raising himself up against his brother to slay him with deliberation, and the mandate was equally applicable to duellists and suicides.

The reverend gentleman then reprobated the practice of duellists, who are called "honourable murderers," and who, instead of seeking reparation from the constituted laws, for any imaginary or actually sustained injury, had recourse to "the field of blood," with weapons in their hands, alike unlawful in the sight of God and man. He then, in beautiful language, impressed upon his audience that the man who, by violent measures, took away his own life, was a murderer. In God, by whom we were created and formed, we were ordained to "live and move, and have our being." Our lives were not our own property, nor ought we to narrow the little span which was allowed us, by usurping the power which alone belonged to God himself. If difficulties oppressed, and dangers seemed to approach, they were no reasons for suicide, because

the command of God, which was perfect, was, "Thou shalt not kill."

It is impossible to follow the reverend gentleman, and notice the several powerful dissuasives which he urged against suicide. He had, no doubt, good reason for urging them.

We cannot omit to add this important truth,—that the suicide was placed in a worse condition than the murderer, in the common acceptation of the term; because the former could not repent of his act, while the latter might, by prayer, repentance, and faith, obtain that mercy which would, through the merits of the Redeemer, gain him an admission in the mansions of the blessed.

The prisoner, during the service, frequently applied his handkerchief to his eyes, and seemed absorbed in reflection; but, near as we were to him, it was impossible to say whether it was for the purpose of wiping away tears. Be this as it may, several of the rustics who sat with him appeared deeply affected, and frequently wept.

After the service was concluded, Corder was conducted from his division (it cannot be called a pew); and as he passed the governor's pew he gave one of his peculiar glances, which he was perhaps induced to do from the recollection of the features of a gentleman who stood near him at the Cock Inn, Polstead, when he was brought before the Coroner's Inquest, and made the second conspicuous character in this awful drama.

If Corder did really feel any compunction from the pointed, but notwithstanding proper address he had heard, the impression was slight indeed, for on his way to the ward he was heard to say, "Ah! that text was a *slap* at me." But it is nevertheless the opinion of those who have had the best opportunity of knowing him, and watching his conduct and observations, that he spoke and oftentimes acted contrary to the dictates of an inward monitor.



OPENING OF THE COURT FOR SPECIAL  
BUSINESS.

On Monday, the 4th of August, the pressure to the Crown Court was immense, and the oldest inhabitants declare that they never saw so intense a desire to obtain admission. This was entirely on account of the notable trial of Corder, respecting whom, whether from interested motives or otherwise we know not, it had been confidently stated by persons connected with the court that it would take the precedence ; on the other hand there was a conflicting opinion, which was that it would be "put off" till Thursday. The sheriff's carriage was obstructed in its progress by the dense crowd ; and even in this, the early part of the assize, it required no little effort to get in, with a hope of hearing something which would either gratify their own curiosity, or enable them to make a communication of importance to their domestic circle of friends.

It was well known to those who could draw their conclusion from the state of the business in the several courts, and the arrangements which had been previously made between the bench and the bar, that the trial of Corder was fixed for Thursday ; but, nevertheless, every one considered that such a representation was ill-founded :—the fair sex we allude to in particular as sceptical upon this point, but in the end they suffered for it, for on the eve before the trial, it was strictly enjoined that no females should be admitted, and this shrieval mandate was issued from a strict regard to humanity, as well as from a desire to perform the duty imposed upon them by the higher powers.

The morning of Thursday at length was added to the days of the year ; and ere it even dawned, the avenues leading to the court were crowded by per-

sons, if we may judge from appearances, of every grade in society, royalty excepted.

On the previous night such was the influx of visitors to Bury, that many had to pay a guinea for a single bed, or to take no bed at all. The inns and public houses were crowded, and many were obliged to go from place to place to procure necessary and humble accommodation.

---

### GRAND JURY.

The following is a list of the gentlemen composing the Grand Jury for the Liberty and Borough of Bury St. Edmund's, before whom the indictment of William Corder for the wilful murder of Maria Marten was preferred, and by them returned "A TRUE BILL."

Sir William Rowley, Bart., FOREMAN.

Joshua Grigby, Esq.

William Newton, Esq.

Henry Spenser Waddington, Esq.

Henry Wilson, Esq.

John Benjafield, Esq.

John Ruggles Brise, Esq.

Orbell Ray Oakes, Esq.

Thomas Quayle, Esq.

Robert Mappletoft, Esq.

Philip Bennett, Jun., Esq.

John Harcourt Powell, Esq.

Henry Charles Blake, Esq.

Job Hanmer, Esq.

Robert Bevan, Esq.

Richard Dalton, Esq.

John Henry Heigham, Esq.

Thomas Robinson, Esq.

John Parker, Esq.

James Conran, Esq.

William Bryant, Esq.

Arthur John Brooke, Esq.

Patrick Power, Esq.



COMMENCEMENT OF THE TRIAL, AND THE  
CONFUSION WHICH PREVAILED AT THE  
OPENING OF THE COURT.

It was well known that, in consequence of the crowded state of the town, and the extraordinary interest which was excited, that great confusion would prevail on the morning of trial; and, in consequence of this anticipation, the Chief Baron Alexander, it was stated, gave peremptory orders that no person should be admitted into any part of the Court, the officers excepted, until he had taken his seat on the Bench; and this mandate was accompanied by a threat that, if he found it disobeyed, he would fine or commit the Under Sheriff and Gaoler for neglect. And it was through acting in strict conformity to this order, that great confusion prevailed among the dense crowd which had collected about the entrance, and the consequence was that, by his own fiat, his Lordship was excluded himself from making his *entré* for nearly twenty minutes. As early as six o'clock in the morning, both the entrances to the Court were literally besieged by persons of every grade in society, from the Baronet's heir to the Suffolk peasant, but the order which the Judge had issued on the previous night was strictly enforced.

At the back entrance, where it was likely the prisoner would be put down, the crowd was more dense, if possible, than in the churchyard, and the mob amused themselves by hoaxing each other.

Every now and then a cry was vociferated, "He's coming, he's coming," which was attended with good, for it caused the mass that had been wedged together, to disperse for a moment, so as to allow breathing time.

At length, the prisoner arrived in the gaol cart, accompanied by the Governor and his principal officer; and now the rush was as intolerable as it is indescribable. Considerable force was exercised to open a lane for the prisoner to pass, which, after much difficulty, was effected. During this struggle, Corder appeared to feel a little gratified that he had become an object of so much curiosity; but it is due to him to state, however, that he did not betray any extraordinary levity.

By half past eight, the prisoner had been secured in the court cell, and then the crowd rushed round to the principal entrance, so that the extensive churchyard was one dense crowd, and it appeared as though the inhabitants of the tombs and sepulchres had given up their dead preparatory to the last great judgment.

About twenty minutes before nine o'clock, Mr. Orridge appeared at the window, and desired the reporters to the newspapers, and persons there for literary purposes, to come forward and show their tickets of admission, but it was impossible to get near the door. So incensed, indeed, were the Buryonians that tickets had been thus issued, that they tried as much as lay in their power to render them unavailable: some cried "No preference—a court of justice is free and open to all;" while others, again, exclaimed, "Let the gentlemen pass, or, as we shall not get in unless they do, we shall know nothing about it."

Counsellors, magistrates, jurors, &c. &c. were wedged together, and two of the former gentlemen had their forensic wigs hooked off, and one was actually ungowned. Some lost their hats, some their pocket-books, and others their money—and not a few the lappets of their coats. By degrees, however, every part of the court was filled, and the crowd, finding their application for admittance of no



avail, gradually withdrew; but there were, nevertheless, tumults in the course of the day, which were suppressed by the local authorities.

---

#### ARRAIGNMENT OF THE PRISONER.

At about twenty minutes to ten o'clock, Mr. Orridge conducted the prisoner to the bar, for the purpose of hearing the indictment read. His appearance did not indicate more than his real age—twenty-four years and nine months. His countenance was fair, but owing to freckles and a sandy beard it appeared rather sanguine; his features bore a smile rather than any other expression; his eyes were rather large and brilliant, in one of which he appeared to have a peculiar cast. He was dressed in a new superfine corbeau surtout, with velvet collar, black waistcoat and blue trowsers, white neckerchief, and with silk stockings and pumps.

Mr. Aspell, the clerk of assize, then read the indictment, to which the prisoner listened with marked attention, frequently leaning forward toward the court, and at other times looking through an eyeglass at the jury who were empanelled to decide his fate. The prisoner was at length asked, in the usual way, whether he was guilty of the alleged murder or not. He replied, in an audible tone, "Not Guilty, my Lord." He was then indicted upon the coroner's inquisition, upon which he also put in the plea of "NOT GUILTY."

---

## Bill of Indictment.\*

Suffolk }  
to wit. }

FIRST COUNT.—The Jurors for our Lord the King, upon their oath present, That William Corder, late of the parish of Polstead, within the liberty of Bury St. Edmund's, in the county of Suffolk, yeoman, on the 18th day of May, in the eighth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Fourth, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, with force and arms, at the parish aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon one Maria Marten, in the peace of God and of our said Lord the King, then and there being, feloniously and wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault : and that the said William Corder, a certain pistol of the value of two shillings, then and there charged with gunpowder and one leaden bullet, which pistol he the said William Corder in his right hand then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did discharge and shoot off at, against, and upon the said Maria Marten; and that the said William Corder, with the leaden bullet aforesaid, out of the pistol aforesaid, then and there, by the force of the gunpowder aforesaid, by the said William Corder discharged and shot off, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did strike, penetrate, and wound the said Maria Marten in and upon the left side of the face of her the said Maria Marten, giving to her, the said Maria Marten, then and there with the leaden bullet aforesaid, so as aforesaid discharged and shot off out of the pistol aforesaid, by the force of the gunpowder aforesaid, by the said William Corder, in and upon the left side of the face of her the said Maria Marten, one mortal wound of the depth of four inches, and of the breadth of half an inch, of which said mortal wound she, the said Maria Marten, then and

\* This Indictment is considered as a masterly specimen of legal skill and exactitude, and will, no doubt, become a standard for future reference. The exact copy of it here given has cost much labour, time, and trouble, but it is a document of too much value to be withheld from the public in a work like this, which aspires to permanent utility.



there instantly died ; and so the jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do say, that the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten, in the manner and by the means aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

SECOND COUNT.—And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, That the said William Corder, on the said 18th day of May, in the year aforesaid, with force and arms, at the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon the said Maria Marten, in the peace of God and our said Lord the King, then and there being, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault ; and that the said William Corder, with a certain sharp instrument, to wit, a sword of the value of one shilling, which he, the said William Corder, in his right hand then and there had and held, her the said Maria Marten, in and upon the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten, between the fifth and sixth ribs on the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did strike, thrust, stab, and penetrate, giving unto the said Maria Marten, then and there, with the sharp instrument aforesaid, in and upon the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten, between the fifth and sixth ribs on the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten, one mortal wound of the depth of six inches, and of the breadth of one inch, of which said mortal wound she the said Maria Marten then and there instantly died. And so the Jurors aforesaid upon their oath aforesaid do say, that the said William Corder, her the said Maria Marten, in the manner and by the means last aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

THIRD COUNT.—And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, That the said William Corder, on the said 18th day of May in the year aforesaid, by force and arms, at the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon the said Maria Marten, in the peace of God and our said Lord the King then and there being, feloniously, wilfully,

and of his malice aforethought did make an assault; and that the said William Corder with a certain sharp instrument, to wit a sword of the value of one shilling, which the said William Corder in his right hand then and there had and held, her the said Maria Marten, in and upon the right side of the face of her the said Maria Marten, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did strike, thrust, stab, and penetrate, giving unto the said Maria Marten then and there, with the sharp instrument last aforesaid, in and upon the right side of the face of her the said Maria Marten, one mortal wound of the depth of four inches, and of the breadth of one inch, of which said mortal wound she the said Maria Marten, then and there instantly died. And so the jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do say that the said William Corder, her the said Maria Marten, in the manner and by the means last aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

FOURTH COUNT.—And the Jurors aforesaid upon their oath aforesaid do further present, That the said William Corder, on the said 18th day of May in the year aforesaid, with force and arms, at the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon the said Maria Marten, in the peace of God and our said Lord the King, then and there being, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did make an assault; and that the said William Corder, with a certain sharp instrument, to wit a sword of the value of one shilling, (which he the said William Corder in his right hand then and there had and held) her the said Maria Marten in and upon the right side of the neck of her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did strike, thrust, stab, or penetrate, giving unto her the said Maria Marten then and there with the sharp instrument last aforesaid, in and upon the right side of the neck of her the said Maria Marten one mortal wound of the depth of two inches, and of the breadth of one inch, of which said mortal wound she the said Maria Marten then and there instantly died. And so the jurors aforesaid upon their oath aforesaid, do say that the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten in the manner and by the means last aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought



did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

FIFTH COUNT.—And the Jurors aforesaid upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, That the said William Corder, on the said 18th day of May, in the year aforesaid, with force and arms at the parish of Polstead aforesaid within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon the said Maria Marten, in the peace of God and of our said Lord the King, then and there being, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault; and that the said William Corder a certain handkerchief of the value of sixpence about the neck of her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did pull, fix, and fasten. And that the said William Corder, with the handkerchief aforesaid, so as aforesaid wilfully, feloniously, and of his malice aforethought pulled, fixed, and fastened about the neck of her the said Maria Marten, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did choak, suffocate, and strangle, of which said choaking, suffocation, and strangling she the said Maria Marten then and there instantly died. And so the jurors aforesaid upon their oath aforesaid do say that the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten in the manner and by the means last aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

SIXTH COUNT.—And the Jurors aforesaid upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, That the said William Corder, on the said 18th day of May, in the year aforesaid, with force and arms, at the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon the said Maria Marten, in the peace of God, and of our said Lord the King, then and there being, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault. And that the said William Corder a certain gun of the value of ten shillings, then and there charged with gunpowder and divers leaden shot, (which gun he the said William Corder in both his hands then and there had and held) then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did discharge and shoot off at, against, and upon the said Maria Marten. And that the said William Corder, with the leaden shot aforesaid, out of the gun aforesaid, then and

there by the force of the gunpowder last aforesaid by the said William Corder so as aforesaid discharged and shot off, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did strike, penetrate, and wound the said Maria Marten in and upon the left side of the face of her the said Maria Marten, giving to her the said Maria Marten, then and there with the leaden shot aforesaid, so as aforesaid discharged and shot off out of the gun aforesaid by the force of the gunpowder last aforesaid by the said William Corder, in and upon the left side of the face of her the said Maria Marten one mortal wound of the depth of four inches, and of the breadth of half an inch, of which said mortal wound she the said Maria Marten then and there instantly died. And so the jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do say that the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten, in the manner and by the means last aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

SEVENTH COUNT.—And the Jurors aforesaid upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, That the said William Corder, on the said 18th day of May, in the year aforesaid, with force and arms, at the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon the said Maria Marten, in the peace of God and our said Lord the King, then and there being, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault. And that he the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten, into a certain hole, dug and made in and under the floor of a certain barn, situate in the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, then and there with both hands feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did cast, throw, put, and push as aforesaid, and in the same hole then lying and being then and there, that is to say, on the said 18th day of May, in the year aforesaid, at the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, with both his hands did cast, throw, and heap divers large quantities of earth, to wit five bushels of earth of no value, and divers large quantities of clay, to wit five bushels of clay of no value, and divers large quantities of gravel, to wit five bushels of gravel of no value. And that the said William Corder, with the said large quantities of earth, clay, and gravel, over and



upon the head, face, and body of the said Maria Marten, so by him cast, thrown, and heaped as aforesaid, then and there her the said Maria Marten feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did choak, suffocate, and smother, of which said choaking, suffocation, and smothering by the said William Corder, in manner and form last aforesaid done and perpetrated, she the said Maria Marten then and there instantly died. And so the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do say that the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten, in the manner and by the means last aforesaid feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

**EIGHTH COUNT.**—And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, That the said William Corder, on the said 18th day of May, in the year aforesaid, with force and arms, at the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon the said Maria Marten, in the peace of God and our said Lord the King, then and there being, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did make an assault. And her the said Maria Marten did then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought take into both the arms of him the said William Corder, and did then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought cast, throw, put, and push the said Maria Marten into a certain hole then and there dug and made and then and there being, of a certain depth, width, and length, to wit, of the depth of two feet, of the width of two feet, and of the length of six feet. And the said William Corder over and upon the said Maria Marten so being then and there cast, thrown, put and pushed into the said hole as aforesaid, and whilst she was and continued in the said hole, did then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, throw and cast divers large quantities of earth, to wit five bushels of earth of no value, divers large quantities of clay, to wit, five bushels of clay of no value, and divers large quantities of gravel, to wit five bushels of gravel of no value, and by and with the said earth, clay, and gravel so cast and thrown as aforesaid, did then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought cover and bury the said Maria Marten, by means of which said throwing and casting such earth, clay, and gravel as aforesaid by the said William Corder upon

and over the said Maria Marten, and of the said covering and burying of the said Maria Marten by the said William Corder, with the said earth, clay, and gravel so by him thrown and cast as aforesaid, the said Maria Marten was then and there suffocated and smothered, of which said suffocating and smothering she the said Maria Marten then and there instantly died. And so the Jurors aforesaid upon their oath aforesaid do say that the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten in the manner and by the means last aforesaid feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

NINTH COUNT.—And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, That the said William Corder, on the said 18th day of May in the year aforesaid, with force and arms, at the parish of Polstead aforesaid, within the liberty aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon the said Maria Marten, in the peace of God and our Sovereign Lord the King, then and there being, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did make and assault, and that the said William Corder, with a certain sharp instrument, to wit a sword of the value of one shilling, which he the said William Corder in his right hand then and there had and held, her the said Maria Marten in and upon the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten, between the fifth and sixth ribs on the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did strike, thrust, stab, and penetrate, giving unto her the said Maria Marten then and there with the sharp instrument last aforesaid in and upon the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten between the fifth and sixth ribs on the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten one mortal wound of the depth of six inches and the breadth of one inch; and that the said William Corder a certain handkerchief about the neck of her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did pull, fix, and fasten, and that the said William Corder with the handkerchief last aforesaid so as last aforesaid wilfully, feloniously, and of his malice aforethought pulled, fixed, and fastened about the neck of her the said Maria Marten her, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did strike, thrust, stab, and penetrate, giving unto her the said Maria Marten then and



there with the sharp instrument last aforesaid, in and upon the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten between the fifth and sixth ribs on the left side of the body of her the said Maria Marten one mortal wound of the depth of six inches and of the breadth of one inch ; and that the said William Corder, with a certain sharp instrument, to wit, a sword of the value of one shilling, which the said William Corder in his right hand then and there had and held, her the said Maria Marten in and upon the right side of the face of her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did strike, thrust, stab, and penetrate, giving unto the said Maria Marten then and there with the sharp instrument last aforesaid in and upon the right side of the face of her the said Maria Marten one mortal wound of the depth of four inches and the breadth of one inch ; and that the said William Corder, with a certain sharp instrument, to wit a sword of the value of one shilling, which he the said William Corder in his right hand then and there had and held, her the said Maria Marten in and upon the right side of the neck of her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did strike, thrust, stab, and penetrate, giving unto her the said Maria Marten then and there with the sharp instrument last aforesaid in and upon the right side of the neck of her the said Maria Marten one mortal wound of the depth of two inches and of the breadth of one inch. And that the said William Corder a certain handkerchief about the neck of her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did pull, fix, and fasten. And that the said William Corder with the handkerchief last aforesaid so as last aforesaid wilfully, feloniously, and of his malice aforethought pulled, fixed, and fastened about the neck of her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did choak, suffocate, and strangle. And that the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did cast, throw, put, and push into a certain hole then and there dug and made, to wit a hole of the depth of two feet, of the width of two, and of the length of six feet, and did then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought cast and throw divers large quantities of earth, to wit five bushels of earth of no value, divers large quantities of clay, to wit five bushels of clay of no value, divers large quantities of gravel, to wit

five bushels of gravel of no value, over and upon the said Maria Marten into the said hole so being then and there cast, thrown, put, and pushed, and whilst she was and continued in the said hole ; and that the said William Corder by and with the said earth, clay, and gravel so cast and thrown as aforesaid upon and over the said Maria Marten, did then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought suffocate and smother ; as well of which said four mortal wounds last aforesaid as of the said choaking, suffocation and strangling with the handkerchief, and of the suffocation and smothering by and with the said earth, clay, and gravel last aforesaid so cast and thrown as last aforesaid, she the said Maria Marten then and there instantly died. And so the Jurors aforesaid upon their oaths aforesaid, do say that the said William Corder her the said Maria Marten in the manner and by the means last aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did kill and murder, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

---

## THE TRIAL.

The indictment having been read,

The following Gentlemen were sworn upon the Petit Jury, to decide this important cause, they having been generally chosen from a distant part of the county from that in which the murder was alleged to have been committed.

The Attorney for the prisoner made two challenges against the panel, viz.—

Mr. J. Willis, of Brandon,

and

Mr. Wm. Ford, of Milden Hall.

The Jury, composed of the following respectable yeomen, was then sworn in :—



Mr. John Bush, of Milden Hall,  
Thomas Fyson, of Milden Hall,  
John Hunt, of Brandon,  
John Ince, of Clare,  
William Jennings, of Norton,  
John Mullinger, of Barningham,  
John Case, of Norton,  
John Ship, of Norton,  
Robert Stiff, of Norton,  
George Wiseman, of Barningham,  
William Wright, of Brandon,  
James Dyson.

A model of the Red Barn, outhouses, &c. was then placed on the table, which was the workmanship of that ingenious land-surveyor, Mr. Hale, of Colchester. Every one who had seen the barn, admired the correctness of this curious epitome of architecture.

The Judge, and others, were supplied with plans and drawings of the several fields from Marten's cottage to the barn, and those by which the latter was surrounded.

The buzz of curiosity occasioned by this exhibition having subsided,

Mr. ANDREWS rose, and addressed the Court and Jury as follows, with great solemnity :—

May it please your Lordship, and you, Gentlemen of the Jury,—

It becomes my painful duty, as Counsel for the Crown in this case, to lay before you facts and circumstances upon which you will hereafter have to decide upon the guilt or innocence of the prisoner at the bar. It has always appeared to me to be the duty of a counsel for the prosecution, placed in the situation in which I am placed, not to enlarge upon,

or aggravate the circumstances which I may be instructed to think would bear against the prisoner. Upon this principle—in a case so important and serious as this is, I shall most cautiously avoid doing so.

It will be necessary for me, however, to lay before you, gentlemen of the jury, a detailed and distinct statement of all the facts of the case, and direct your attention to some on which the important bearings of the alleged offence depended; and in full confidence that the important duty you have to perform, will be attended to with fidelity, I shall proceed to detail the facts to which I have already alluded.

The prisoner at the bar is the son of respectable parents, who lived at Polstead in this county. His father has been for some time dead. Whilst he was living, he occupied a farm of considerable extent in the parish of Polstead. From the time of his death down to the time of the transaction which it is your peculiar province to inquire into, the management of the farm devolved first upon Thomas Corder, an elder brother of the prisoner, and after his death, in some measure or altogether upon the prisoner himself.

Maria Marten, the young woman whose death the prisoner stands charged with, was the daughter of parents in a humbler situation in life, when put in comparison of his, and by living also, and being brought up, in the same parish, the prisoner at the bar and the deceased were, as a natural consequence, well known to each other. It would, however, appear that the prisoner and the unfortunate young woman did not become intimately acquainted until about a year previous to the 18th of May, 1827. At or about that time, their intimacy was matured, and the consequence was, the birth of an illegitimate child.

Gentlemen, you will please to observe that Maria



Marten was not delivered of this child at her father's house, but at some distance from the parish of Polstead. About seven or eight weeks before the 18th of May of last year, she returned home to her father's house with this infant, of which Corder, the prisoner, acknowledged himself to be the father. I am, however, instructed to say, that although this child died about three weeks after the deceased came back to her father's cottage, no suspicion attached to that event, because the infant appeared to have been afflicted from its birth.

It is important, gentlemen, that I should mention that, during the time of the intimate connexion between Corder the prisoner, and Maria Marten, the prisoner at the bar was heard to say to the deceased, that the parish officers of Polstead meant to take her up respecting some illegitimate children she had borne therein ; and, moreover, that he (the prisoner) made this statement repeatedly, and that he and Maria had been heard to have some difference together. Upon one occasion, it would be proved that some difference arose, or words passed between them relative to a five pound note, which relates to a circumstance that will hereafter appear in the evidence to be adduced. Upon one of those occasions, I am bound to tell the jury that it will be in evidence before you, that when the prisoner made this statement about the threat held out of sending her to prison, she said, that if she did go, the prisoner at the bar should go also !

It is right that I should also state to the jury, that before the birth of the child (Corder's child,) the prisoner said upon one occasion that he would make her his wife. On the Sunday before the 18th of May (the 18th being on a Friday,) Corder called on Maria for her to go to his mother's house, stating that it was agreed that they should go to Ipswich the next day. She did not go, however, for on the Monday before the 18th day of May, she

returned again to her father's. It was afterwards arranged by the prisoner, that she should go on the Friday following,

And now, gentlemen, I come to an important part of the transaction. Corder came to the house of the father of Maria Marten about the middle of the day, and at that time Maria was at home with her mother up stairs. He said "Now, Maria, you must go with me, I shall be ready;" to which the deceased replied, "I can't go with you in the middle of the day in this way, because people will know me—I cannot go to-day." The prisoner replied to this, "You have been disappointed several times, and you shall go now."

Gentlemen, it was ultimately arranged that she should go, and some things were to be taken to a barn, of which something will be said hereafter, as one belonging to the prisoner's mother,—afterwards the prisoner and deceased were to repair thither on their way to Ipswich, where Corder had told the family of the deceased, that they were going to be married. In the large bag which was taken to the Red Barn; the deceased put several articles of dress, and among other things a small wicker basket reticule, in which basket it would be proved, that on the day the deceased left her cottage, she put a black velvet bag or reticule lined with old black silk.

After these arrangements were made relative to this journey to Ipswich, Corder absented himself from Marten's cottage for some time, perhaps a quarter of an hour, during which interval it would appear, that Maria had put on male attire, which had been left for her by the prisoner for the purpose of disguise. This apparel consisted of a coat, waistcoat, trowsers, and a man's hat, which will be more fully described than I am enabled to do, or indeed, in the present stage of the business, am inclined to do.



I should have observed, that previous to the deceased thus disguising herself, the prisoner took the bag containing her dress to the Red Barn, and then returned for her.

Gentlemen, after the prisoner had returned, and the young woman having disguised herself, they left the cottage, she by the back door, and he by that leading to the road, and they each proceeded towards the Barn. Underneath the male attire, which I have described the deceased to have put on, she had also a portion of her female dress, which consisted of a flannel petticoat, a shift, a pair of stays, in which was an ashen busk: she also had ear-rings, and three combs in her hair, which will all, or some fragments of them, be produced before you.

I ought also to state, that beyond these she had a green handkerchief round her neck, and one of another colour, which I shall have to remark upon hereafter.

Thus departed this hapless girl from her father's house, and nothing was seen or heard of her from that day to the present, excepting accounts which had been given respecting her by the prisoner at the bar, and which would be proved to be utter falsehoods.

I should have stated, that before they went away, and while they were talking about her changed dress, the prisoner told her that he had seen Baalham, the constable, who informed him that he had received a letter from Mr. Whitmore, containing a warrant for her apprehension, respecting her bastard children. Now, gentlemen, Baalham will be called, and will prove that he never received such a letter, or held such a conversation with the prisoner.

It so happened that on the day they first left the cottage to go to the Red Barn, a younger brother to the deceased was gathering some provender

for his donkey, when he saw the prisoner going from the Red Barn with a pickaxe upon his shoulder, in the direction of his own house. The boy, on his return home, told his mother of this circumstance, and she, on the following day but one, related it to the prisoner, who denied that he had been there with a pickaxe, but added, "it must be a mistake of George's, for the person he saw was Tom Akers who had the axe, for he (Akers) was planting some trees in the neighbourhood of the Barn." But Akers would be called to prove this statement to have no existence in truth. In the course of this conversation with Mrs. Marten, she asked what he had done with Maria; he said, that although he took her away to be married, he could not do so, as there was a necessity for the license to be sent to London, but he had left Maria with Miss Rowland, the sister of a schoolfellow of his, and who resided at a village in the vicinity of Yarmouth.

On this occasion, gentlemen, as on many subsequent ones, the prisoner always stated, that the hapless girl was well, and attributed her not writing to her hand being disabled by a gathering on the back of it.

In the interval between the 18th of May and the following harvest, Corder had many conversations with different persons about Maria, and on these occasions he gave different accounts of her to what he had done to her father and family. He told one person she was gone by a steam-packet to France, and to another, that she was living at a great distance from Polstead. About harvest-time he had a particular conversation about Maria, with a woman of the name of Stow, to which she would be called to speak.

He told her that Maria Marten was not at any great distance from them. She asked him if Maria was likely to have any more children? to which



he replied, "No, she is not; Maria Marten will have *no more* children." Mrs. Stow said, Why not? she is a very young woman. To this the prisoner replied—"No, she will have no more children,—she has had her number." Mrs. Stow then asked him, "Is she far from hence?" he replied, "No, she is not far from us, and I can go to her whenever I like\*." Mrs. Stow then said, perhaps you are jealous of her—he replied that he was not, for he knew that when he was not with her, no other person was.

Gentlemen, there is one other circumstance connected with the 18th of May, to which I will direct your attention. Some time thereabouts the prisoner borrowed a spade of the female to whom I have just alluded. She could not, however, tell the precise period upon which he borrowed it, but there was a circumstance which caused her to know that it was about the middle of May of last year. She had been confined and delivered of a child, and it was between this happening and her being churched, that the spade was borrowed. You will, however, gentlemen, hear her statement, and draw your own inferences from the testimony she will adduce.

Previous to the 18th of May, the Red Barn had been emptied, excepting the litter which was placed at the bottom of the bay to preserve the corn from the damp, and this brings me now to speak of transactions connected with the month of September.

When the corn was cut, Corder was present, and gave directions that the first which should be carted should be put into the upper bay of the Red Barn,

\* This appears to have been the only true statement made by the prisoner, in the midst of the long tissue of falsehoods he uttered respecting the unfortunate girl; for this conversation was held within thirty rods of the spot where he had deposited his murdered victim! and whose blood was then crying out for vengeance upon his guilty head.

and the prisoner was present during the time the first and second load were put in.

The keys of this barn were kept always in the possession of the prisoner, or at his mother's house, and it was difficult of access because it was surrounded on one side by a number of sheds and out-houses, and the only approach to it was through or over a gate which was seven feet high, as you will perceive by looking at the model, and taking the scale into consideration.

Gentlemen, after the harvest was got in, the prisoner left Polstead, and this was on or about the 19th of September, and on that occasion he was driven to Colchester by a person of the name of Pryke. To this person he gave a different account of Maria Marten from that which he had given to any other person, for he said he had not seen her since the May preceding. Before he left Polstead on that occasion, he saw her father, when he told him he (Corder) should have the pleasure of seeing Maria soon ; that he intended to be married to her, and he said he had bought a suit of clothes for the occasion.

About the 19th or 20th of October, Mr. Marten received a letter from the prisoner bearing the London post mark. In that letter he said he had made Maria his wife. He likewise expressed his surprise that the old man had not written an answer to a letter written by his daughter, in which she set forth the particulars of the wedding, at which Mr. Rowland acted as "daddy," and Miss Rowland as bride's-maid. He also urged the old gentleman to write to him forthwith, and direct to him under some initials, to a place named in the City. The father replied immediately, and informed the prisoner that he had received no letter from his daughter.

At the latter end of October or the beginning of November, Mr. Matthews, a gentleman I shall call



before you, had some conversation with the prisoner respecting Maria Marten. This took place in London, when he told Mr. Matthews that the reason why he had not been able to marry Maria Marten was because he could not get his family affairs arranged; he added, that she was living with him in the Isle of Wight. I should have observed, that previous to this interview, Corder wrote again in reply to Thomas Marten's letter, and said that he would make some inquiry at the Post-Office about the letter written by Maria; but he supposed that it was lost coming over the water from Cowes to Portsmouth.

Some further time having elapsed, and no tidings having reached Marten about his daughter, the family became, as a matter of course, very much alarmed, and suspicions were entertained relative to her fate. From day to day those suspicions increased, till, at length, they took a definite shape, and the father of Maria was urged by his wife to examine the Red Barn, and he ultimately did so; but the search did not take place till April of the present year, at which time the corn of the previous harvest had been threshed out, and nothing remained but the old litter.

In company with another person, he searched two or three places, and, at length, the upper bay, in one part of which the father discovered that the ground was not so firm as in other places.

This induced them to open it, and the result was that they found a human body a little way from the surface. The body had on part of a female's dress, and, among other things, part of a pair of jean stays, a shift, and petticoat. There was also a handkerchief found under the body, and a green one round the neck of the corpse. The body and the clothes were narrowly inspected by Marten, his wife, and Ann, the sister of Maria; and they will describe to you, gentlemen, the marks which the

deceased had about her person, by which they were enabled to identify it as their relative.

Maria Marten had an excrescence on her neck, which the vulgar call “a wen,”—so had the body which had been found in the barn. Maria Marten had lost two of her teeth,—so had the body found at the barn.

Gentlemen, the features were not entirely decomposed, and you will hear what the witnesses have to say upon that point.

Maria Marten, when living, had a pain in her side, and was labouring under asphexia. The surgeons who examined the body found in the barn, will tell you, that they discovered symptoms of inflammation in that body.

I ought to have told you that the body remained in the ground until the surgeon inspected it. That gentleman will tell you that he traced the wound from a pistol-ball in the face—a wound in the neck, inflicted by a sharp instrument—a wound in the face given by a similar instrument—and a third wound, of the same kind, between the fifth and sixth ribs, and had penetrated the heart. The first surgeon who examined the body will tell you, that he took off a silk handkerchief from the neck, which was pulled so tight that it would have caused strangulation and death.

Gentlemen, in consequence of these discoveries, suspicion immediately attached to the prisoner at the bar, and an intelligent police-officer was sent in pursuit of him; and it was through his exertions that the prisoner was apprehended at a house at Ealing, in the county of Middlesex. Lea, the officer, who will be produced before you, will be called to prove that, when he first saw the prisoner, he told him he was come to apprehend him upon a serious charge; indeed, for nothing less than the murder of Maria Marten; and asked the prisoner if he knew such a woman—the prisoner gave a negative reply.

s



The officer then said, Did you ever know such a person as Maria Marten? He replied, "No, never; you must be mistaken in the person you come to apprehend." Lea said, "No, I am not; I believe your name is Corder?" The prisoner replied it was. The officer again asked him thrice over, whether he did not know Maria Marten; to which inquiry the prisoner said, "No, I never knew any such person." The officer declined pressing this matter further, and apprehended him.

On his way toward the Red Lion, at Brentford, Lea told him that the body was found, to which the prisoner made no reply at first, but he afterwards inquired when it was discovered? Lea told him, on the preceding Friday. At the time the officer apprehended the prisoner, he searched the house in which the latter had been living, and there he found a small black velvet bag, which had some peculiarities about it, as it was lined with black silk, and had a singularly broad selvage round the rim. This bag I am instructed, gentlemen, to-day will be proved to have been the bag of Maria Marten, and in this bag the officer found a brace of pistols\*.

After the officer, Lea, had been to Polstead, and discovered that the body had been pierced with a sharp instrument, he recollected having seen a sword at the prisoner's house; that sword he afterwards went to Ealing and procured, and it will be produced to-day for your examination. I shall prove that some time before the 18th of May, the prisoner went to a cutler, and ordered him to sharpen this very sword; the instructions were obeyed—the weapon was ground—and the prisoner took it away, and it was afterwards seen in his possession at Polstead.

\* When Maria Marten left home on the 18th of May, she took upwards of seven pounds in cash with her, which has never been found; which leaves no room to doubt but that Corder was in this instance guilty of the double crime of murder and robbery.

Gentlemen, these are the main facts, which I have considered it my duty to submit to your consideration. I shall not make any observations upon them, because they will come more properly from the learned Judge on the bench than from me; from this conviction on my mind, I shall abstain from entering into any analysis of them. There is, however, one observation which I think I may make—nay, which I feel myself bound to make—in justice both to the prisoner at the bar, and to you.

This case has been a matter of great notoriety and discussion; much curiosity has been excited, and many reports circulated—some, perhaps, true, and most likely others utterly unfounded in fact. These reports, gentlemen, have no connexion whatever with the important case which you are empannelled to decide. I am sure if you have heard such reports you will discharge them from your mind, and proceed calmly to consider and determine the case upon the evidence which will be adduced to-day, and upon that only. Your duty to the public, to the prisoner, and to yourselves, in the solemn verdict which you will ere long be called upon to deliver, requires that you should divest from your minds all preconceived opinions, and decide alone upon the influence of legitimate evidence.

Gentlemen, in conclusion, I beg to state that the facts which I shall have to offer in evidence, will be sifted by an acute cross-examination, and that they will be commented upon by the learned Judge; and, guided as you will be by advantages like those, I hope to God that you will be able to come to a proper decision.

If, in the exercise of your judgment, you shall be of opinion either that the prisoner is innocent of the serious crime laid to his charge in this indictment, or if you should, upon mature reflexion, consider that the charge is not fully, fairly, and distinctly



proved against him, in God's name let the prisoner have the advantage to which he is entitled, and acquit him; but, if you shall be of opinion that the prisoner is the person who murdered Maria Marten, you cannot discharge your duty to God or your country in any other way, than by returning a verdict of Guilty, regardless of the consequences to the prisoner which may result from it.

During this address, which was delivered with great deliberation, the Court was in a state of profound silence, and all eyes were fixed upon the speaker, and none more so than those of the accused person, who, however, almost laughed at some parts of it.

All the witnesses on both sides had been prohibited from entering the Court, and they were accommodated with a room adjoining, from which they were brought in, one by one, for examination.

---

#### EVIDENCE FOR THE PROSECUTION.

ANN MARTEN, examined by Mr. ANDREWS.—I am the wife of Thomas Marten, and live at Polstead. My husband had a daughter of the name of Maria Marten. I know William Corder, the prisoner at the bar, and have for nearly seventeen years; he was living at Polstead, and was acquainted with Maria; they were intimately connected, but I cannot say when they became so, or about when. Corder came to our cottage frequently, but when he first began to do so I do not know, but it was twelve months before the 18th of May, last year. In the course of that year, Maria became pregnant, and she was delivered of a child at Sudbury. I do not know when she came back

from her lying-in to her father's house, but I am sure it was about six or seven weeks before the 18th of May, 1827. When she returned, she brought a child with her, an infant about a month old, but it died. I cannot say whether it was a fortnight or more before the day Maria went to the Red Barn. The prisoner used to come to our house after the return from Sudbury, in like manner as before. (The prisoner here began to take notes.) The prisoner said he was the father of this child. During the time Corder came backwards and forwards to our cottage, I heard frequent conversations between him and Maria, but I do not know that they had particular reference to this child. I have heard them converse about the burial of this child. I heard Maria and Corder say the child was buried at Sudbury, to which place he carried it for that purpose. I have heard them have a conversation about a five-pound note, at different times. She used to tell him, that he had taken both her and her child's bread out of their mouths. She had a child previously, which I kept; the child, of which the prisoner was father, was her third. After the birth of the last child, I heard something said about going to prison. Corder told me that Baalham had a warrant to take her up about her children. He told her the officers were going to punish her. I was present, and heard him say it, previous to the 18th of May. I could not hear then what else passed between them. I heard the last conversation about the five-pound note. I recollect the Sunday before the 18th of May. That Sunday evening, Corder came to our house, and stopped half an hour, perhaps three quarters of an hour, and then Maria went away with him; they said they were going to Ipswich early the next day, and she was to sleep at his mother's house. Although they went away together for that purpose, she came back in the morning about three or four o'clock. I saw Corder on



the Monday, the 14th of May, when I heard him tell Maria that she should go to Ipswich on the following Wednesday, and he would drive her in his gig.

They did not go on the Wednesday. I know this because he stopped at our house in consequence of its being Stoke fair. He then appointed Thursday the 17th, but he came and said that he must put off the journey because his brother James was worse, and his life was not expected to continue many hours. On the Friday (the day laid in the indictment) Corder came to our cottage in great haste, and went up stairs ; I and Maria were there. He said, " I am come, Maria, make haste, for I am going." Maria said, " How can I go at this time of day without any body seeing me ?" He said, " Never mind, you have been disappointed several times, and you shall go now." While this conversation was going on, I continued in the room. Maria said to him, " How am I to go ?" He replied, " You can go to the Red Barn, and wait till I come to you there in the course of the evening, when I will get the horse and gig for you." Maria then said, " How am I to order about my things ?" He said, " I will take your things up to the Red Barn, and come back and walk with you ;" adding, " none of my workmen are in the field, and I know the coast is quite clear." Maria's things were then put up in a brown Holland bag, and they consisted of a reticule wicker basket, a black velvet reticule, two pair of black silk stockings, a silk gown of the same colour, a black cambric skirt, and several other articles of dress. Corder took the bag away in his hand after the things were packed. Maria then dressed herself in a brown coat, striped waistcoat, and blue trowsers ; under those she wore her petticoat, a pair of white stays, a green and red handkerchief, and a silk one, and an Irish linen chemise, which the deceased had made herself. I laced

Maria's stays that morning, and helped her to dress herself. I know the marks upon the shift, and some on the shoes she went out in. The petticoat was made of flannel. The day before she went away, I saw her put an ashen busk into the stays, instead of a bone one. I have seen it frequently, and it was made by Martin Ramham. Her shoes were made of Denmark satin, and had leather foreparts. I saw Corder come back after she was dressed. Maria was up stairs then, and we talked together before she came down. The prisoner said, "Mrs. Marten, the reason why I go to Ipswich is because John Baalham the constable came to me in the stable this morning, and told me that he had got a letter from Mr. Whitmore, who was in London, to proceed against Maria about her bastard children." After his waiting a little while, she came down stairs. I said to him, "Oh, William, if you had but married Maria as I wished you, all this would have been settled." "Well," said he, "I am going to Ipswich to marry her to-morrow morning." I said, "William, what will you do if that cannot be done?" He replied, "Don't make yourself unhappy, she shall be my lawful wife before my return, or I will get her a place until such time as we can be married." This conversation took place before Maria came down stairs. After she came down, she asked me to go into the yard to see if any body was about who was likely to see her go. She was now dressed in man's clothes. Nothing more was said about the clothes after this. She had a man's hat on, and one large and two small combs in her hair, and ear-rings in her ears, which she had worn a good while, and I had frequently seen them. They then went out at different ways, he went out at the front door, next the road, (*vide the plate of Marten's Cottage*), and she at the back door. He went up the road towards the Red Barn, and she across the field and the fen (a piece of



marsh land near the cottage,) and they met at the gate near the road. I saw them meet, and they both got over the gate, and walked together in Harefield. I have neither heard from nor seen Maria since that day. Corder had a gun in his hand when he went away, which, he said, was charged. Maria had a green cotton umbrella, with a crooked bone handle, or hook, and a button. I believe the gun was loaded, because he told me so. I said, "Is it charged?" and he said, "Yes,—don't let the child (alluding to the little boy) meddle with it."

The next time I saw Corder, to speak to him, was on the Sunday morning (20th) about nine o'clock, when I said, "William, what have you done with Maria?" He said, "I have left her at Ipswich, where I have got a comfortable place for her, and she is going down to the water-side with Miss Rowland, who is the sister of a schoolfellow of mine." I said, "What will she do for clothes?" He said, "Miss Rowland has got plenty, which fit her, and she would not let her send for any." He said, at the same time, he had got a license; but it must go to London, and, therefore, he could not marry for a month or six weeks. He said, "She will want for nothing—for I have changed a check for 20/., and given her the money." He said, he took her to Ipswich by way of Stratford. I asked him, where Maria changed her dress? He said, "In the barn; and I then put the man's clothes in the seat of the gig I travelled in." He said, after she had changed her dress, she put a great coat on, to conceal her, till they got to a bye lane, when she pulled it off; she took off the man's hat, then, and put on her Leghorn bonnet.

I have a son, named George. He told me, that on the day Maria and Corder left, he saw the latter going from the Red Barn, in a direction for his own house, with a pickaxe on his shoulder. I said to Corder, when I next saw him, "So you did not

go from the Red Barn as soon as you promised me you should." He said, "Yes, Mrs. Marten, that I am sure I did—we went away in half an hour—I'm sure it did not exceed three-quarters of an hour." I said, No, you did not, for my George saw you go down Thistley Lay long after that with a pick-axe on your shoulder—(Thistley Lay is a pasture near Hare-field, and between Marten's cottage and the Red Barn.) The prisoner then said, "I am sure, Mrs. Marten, it was not me; it was Tom Akers, who was planting some trees upon Mr. Hay's hill. I remember John Corder, the prisoner's brother, being buried; it was about Polstead fair time last year—Polstead fair is just over, it is in the middle of July.

During the interval between the time Maria went away and the following September, I saw the prisoner frequently, sometimes two or three times a day, and sometimes not for two or three days together, when he said he had been to see my daughter; he invariably said, she was well and happy, and living comfortably with Miss Rowland, near Yarmouth. He said frequently that at Michaelmas he should take her home to his mother's farm. After Maria went away on the 18th of May, I never received any letter from her. When I expressed my surprise that she did not write, as she could write very well, he mostly said, she had a bad hand, and could not. He came to take leave of us when he was about to leave Polstead, when he said he was going down by the water side for his health; and that he should call at Yarmouth and take Maria with him, and be married immediately at Ipswich. I have been shown different articles since the body was found, which I know were Maria's. Maria had a wen on her neck, and a cough long before May 1827. She had had one tooth drawn, and one had decayed out; one was from either jaw.



When she went away, she had a silk handkerchief with her, with yellow flowers, which belonged to her little boy. It was put over her chin, over the green striped one, to hide her face. I asked Corder for the child's handkerchief afterwards, as he was to bring it back, when he told me that it was *lost*,—this was some time after their departure in May. I remember the funeral of Corder's brother. I was at it, and so was the prisoner, who had an umbrella with him, which I knew to be Maria's. The funeral was a little after Maria went away. Some time after the funeral, I had a conversation with him respecting the umbrella. I said, "William, you had got Maria's umbrella at your brother's burying:" he said, "No, I had not; it was one which Deborah Pryke had left there, and I am going to take it home." I said, "I think, Mr. William, it was Maria's." "No, it is not," he said, "but it is one just like it." About a week before he left Polstead, I named the umbrella again, when he said that he had been to Ipswich, and it rained when he came away, and so Maria lent it him, or he should have been dripping wet. He showed me a gold ring, which he said was Maria's, and also a brace of pistols. This was before the death of Thomas Corder. He said he bought the ring at Colchester. I saw the pistols after Maria came home from Sudbury with the child.

During the time this witness was giving her evidence, the prisoner put on his spectacles, being very near-sighted, and took out his red morocco pocket-book, upon which he commenced writing, and oftentimes looked stedfastly at her. She appeared a decently dressed countrywoman; but she never returned him a look, but kept her eyes fixed steadily on the examining counsel. Among the thousand rumours circulated about this case, it was

reported that this last witness had been “bought off” by the Corder family; but it is due to state, that during the long inquiry and the following rigid cross-examination, no person could give her evidence more satisfactorily.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I am the mother of three children. Maria was my step-daughter, and she had a brother and sister (now living), which were born to my husband by a former marriage. I was anxious that Maria should marry the prisoner, but I do not know that she was anxious about it. [The prisoner here took a note from his pocket-book, which, from the slight view we had of it, we conjectured to be the handwriting of the deceased. The prisoner’s counsel, to whom it was sent, made no use of it, however.] Maria was gone two months to Sudbury. The prisoner brought her and the child home in a gig, but I do not know how long before the 18th of May. The infant afterwards died in my arms. When they took it away, it had been dead one day and two nights. I do not know that it was buried at Sudbury. After the child was taken from my home, I knew nothing about it.

Mr. *Broderick*.—Now, woman, upon your solemn oath, do you know that it was not buried at Sudbury, but that you know when and where it was buried?

*Witness*.—Maria always told me that it was buried at Sudbury, that is all I know about it.

Mr. *Broderick*.—Do you not know that, instead of going to Sudbury, Maria went to Mr. Corder’s house, and slept there?

*Witness*.—The prisoner told me she was there.



Mr. *Broderick*.—When was that ?

*Witness*.—When he came home with her. Maria was present when he said so. From what they both told me, I had reason to believe that they had *not* been to Sudbury. When Maria went away on the 18th, her sister Ann and my little boy (George) were at home. They all knew that it was settled for them to go to the barn, and we saw them go in that direction. I have seen a brace of pistols at our house. I saw Corder once snapping them in the fire-place when Maria was present. He often came to our house. He did not use to supply me or Maria with victuals. On the day they went away he took some out of his pocket, which she ate. He gave me some money on account of the child (Mr. Matthews's child), after they went away. Mr. Matthews used to allow Maria five pounds a quarter. I am sure he told Maria about her being taken up about her bastard children. There had been a talk about it by other people, and me and my husband were afraid she would be taken up. Corder often brought a gun with him. I was examined before the Coroner, at the Cock Inn, Polstead. Mr. Wayman again cross-examined me, and I took my oath. The prisoner was not there at the time. I do not know how long this was after the inquest ; it might be a fortnight, more or less. I did not see Corder when I was examined at the inquest. He remained in the neighbourhood three or four months after she went away. Thomas Corder was drowned before May, 1827. The prisoner showed me a ring before that event, which he said was Maria's wedding ring. When Maria upbraided him about the five-pound note, Corder said, " Don't tell me about that any more, for as long as I have a shilling, you and your child shall have it." Maria used to dress rather fine, and her sister and father, as well as myself, used to quarrel about it.







THOMAS MARTEN.



ANN MARTEN. ✓

Ann

She was very dull when she went away on the 18th of May.

By Mr. *Andrews*.—The money which Corder gave me was to maintain Mr. Matthews's child, but I supposed it came from Maria.

*Thomas Marten*, examined by Mr. *Andrews*.—I am a mole-catcher and labourer. I live at Polstead. Maria Marten was my daughter. She was about twenty-six years old when she went away on the 18th of May, last year. I did not see her that morning because I go out very early. I do not know how long the prisoner and she were on intimate terms, but I believe a year and a half. I did not find out that Maria had gone away till Saturday the 19th; on Sunday, the 20th, I saw Corder at my house, when he told me that he had taken my daughter to Ipswich, and that he was going to be married to her, as soon as the license he had got came back from London. He said that Maria was with the sister of a gentleman that he (Corder) went to school with at Hadleigh. He told me, when he came to take leave of me in September, that he had purchased a new suit of clothes for the wedding. I have received two letters from him, which I have given to the attorney for the prosecution. I was present at the first examination at Polstead. I searched the Red Barn, on the 19th of April, in consequence of what my wife used to say to me \*. There is a lane goes down by the side of the barn. I examined this bay (pointing to the model), which was covered with litter and fodder. Mr. Pryke, Mrs. Corder's bailiff, was with me. He raked and I poked into the straw a good while before we found any thing, when, raking the straw, I found some large loose stones about the middle of the bay, and there was an appearance of the earth having

\* Vide page 8, concerning the dream.



been disturbed. When I had poked with my mole-spike about four inches, I found something come out with it like flesh \*. I smelt of it, and it was very disagreeable. We made further search, and found that the hole contained a body.

William Pryke said, that before we proceeded further, we had better get somebody to come. He locked the barn up, and we came away. He went to the village, and I waited near the spot. Pryke came back, but brought nobody with him. We did not go into the barn again then, but I went to my own home. I returned to the barn again, in about two hours, and found Mr. Pryke and Mr. Bowtell there. We then took up part of the earth, until we came to the body. There appeared to be a handkerchief round her neck, but until we had removed the outer folds I could not see the colour. The body was lying down, but not stretched out. The hole appeared to be about three feet, or three feet and a half long. The legs were drawn up, and the head bent down. I put my mole-spike near the hip-bone; the spike is about as thick as my little finger. I went away about half an hour afterwards, but when I went the shoes had not been found. We left the body there on Saturday night, in the same state we found it. On the next morning, when the inquest was held before Mr. Wayman, Mr. Lawton the surgeon being present, the earth was then cleared entirely from the body, and it was raised up from the hole and placed on a door, and taken to the light to be examined. I could not swear to the body, but the face and mouth looked like my daughter's. She had a wen about her gullet; she had had a stoppage in her throat for some time, and a bad cough. There was a handkerchief round the body, and part of a shawl under it. I found the busk, some earrings, and

\* The top of the body was not more than five inches beneath the surface.

part of a pair of stays, and the busk, a shift, and some combs.

By Mr. *Broderick*.—A person named Pryke accompanied me in the examination for the body. We put the rake several times into the ground before we found it; something came up with the spade like flesh. I did not remove the body at all until the coroner came. I was examined at the inquest, and once at the Cock at Polstead. Mr. Wayman was there for the purpose, but neither was the prisoner nor a magistrate present. I am sure it was about the hip of the body where I put my spike in. A mole-spike is round at one end, and a spud at the other.

By Mr. *Andrews*.—The prisoner was at the Cock at Polstead at one of the examinations. When I put the spike into the ground I raised it gradually.

*Ann Marten* examined.—I was sister to the late Maria Marten. On Friday the 18th of May I was at home, when my sister was dressed in man's attire. Corder was there. I saw her in a man's hat, but she had her combs underneath. Corder said he was going to Ipswich to get a license to marry my sister the next morning. I have never seen my sister alive since the 18th of May, but I have seen Corder frequently. He told me, as well as my father and mother, that he had left my sister with a lady, and that he was going to take her to the water side, where he would get married. I have seen a dead body since which was found in the Red Barn, which I know to be my sister's. I was present when the coroner and jury were there. I saw the body taken out of the Red Barn, and I then thought it was Maria by the things she had on.

(The witness here described the articles which her sister went out in, with great minuteness, as



also the marks by which she considered she identified the body.)

The clothes which my sister went away in had been James Corder's.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Prendergast*.—I am not aware that my sister wanted very much to marry the prisoner, but I have heard her say she should marry him. William Corder used to say that he was going to be married to her, but Maria did not say the same thing frequently. Maria and I generally lived upon good terms, but we have sometimes quarrelled. I do not know about my mother-in-law quarrelling with her; they might have angry words sometimes, but not very often. I am positive that the body I saw was my sister Maria's. I know it by the features generally.

*George Marten* called in.

*Chief Baron*.—How old are you, my little fellow?

*Witness*.—About ten years old.

*Judge*.—Do you know the nature of an oath? What will become of you when you die, if you swear falsely, and state the things which are not true?

*Witness*.—God would send me to hell, Sir.

*Judge*.—Let him be sworn.

[About this time, the prisoner partook of a slight repast, which he seemed to enjoy, and he was plentifully supplied with water, which was brought into Court in pails, to allay the thirst of the multitude.]

The witness having been sworn, stated, in his examination by Mr. *Kelly*—I am brother to Maria Marten, who is dead. I saw her, on the day she

left my father's house, with William Corder. She went out of the cottage alone at the back door. Corder, whom I know very well, used to come often to our house. On the day you are speaking about, he had a gun with him, which, I heard him say, was loaded, and he desired my mother not to let the child meddle with it. He had nothing, as I saw, but the gun when he went out. Before that, he took a bag away for Maria, which he said he should carry to the Red Barn. It was half past twelve when my sister went out, and this is the last time in my life I ever saw her, but I saw Corder afterwards frequently. On the day they left our house, I saw him again coming from the barn with a pick-axe on his shoulder. I am quite sure it was on the day that my sister left with him. It was about half past three when I saw him; between three and four however. He was then going from the Red Barn homewards. It was in Broadfield that I saw him; he went across Broadfield, and came over the corner of it, and went into Thistley Lay, in the way which led to his own house. I did not see anybody with him, or anybody else near at the time. I was in Wellfield, and it is likely he did not see me. I was only about twenty roods from him. I was there cutting up grass for my dickey. I am quite sure he is the person I saw with the pick-axe. My sister Maria cried when she left home.

*Phæbe Stow* examined by *Mr. Kelly*.—I live at Polstead, and know William Corder. My house is the nearest to, and about thirty rods from, the Red Barn. I remember in last year, Corder's calling upon me, and asking for something. It was about one o'clock. I have known Corder for years. When he came in, he said, "Mrs. Stow, has your husband got an old *spade* that you can lend me?" I went and took one to him; it was my husband's *spade*. I had lately been confined through child-birth, and



he said, "How are you, Phœbe?" I said, "I am very weak and low." He replied, "You look bad enough, but I am in a hurry, so that I can't stop to talk with you." He then went away. I was confined on the 29th of April, and that day four weeks I went to church, that would be the 27th of May. I can't tell the day on which the spade was borrowed, but, I believe, it was a little more than a week before I went to church\*. The spade came back, but I do not know who brought it. One day in last harvest, I had some conversation with the prisoner about Maria and the child, and I asked him where the child was which Maria Marten had by him. I began the conversation. He said, "The child was dead and buried, *and Maria would never have any more.*" I said, "That's more than you or I know, for she is a young woman, and may have many more children yet." "No," said he, "Maria Marten will never be troubled with any more children." I said, "What do you go by?" and he only replied, "She has had her number." I said, "That neither you or I can tell." Corder then said, "I can, for I'll be d—d if ever she will have any more." I then asked, whether he was married to her, and, if he was, why he did not live with her? He replied to this, "She is where I can go to her at any day or hour I please." I then said, "Perhaps you are rather jealous, and think that when you are away, she is with somebody else." He said, "When I am away, I am sure nobody else is with her." I do not remember any further conversation.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I am not a gossiping woman, or more talkative than most women generally are (*a laugh*). I do not know that Corder managed his mother's farm. My hus-

\* The testimony of this, and the foregoing witnesses, are fully confirmed by the prisoner's statement. *Vide* his Defence relative to the pick-axe and the spade.

band worked on the farm, but I know nothing about management, except you mean that he looked over the land. I may have lent some of the men a spade at chance times. I swear that I never lent the prisoner one at a "chance time" before. I do not know when the spade came back, or who brought it home. I do not recollect when I said Corder borrowed a spade, but it was before the Coroner sat at Polstead, when I was examined before Mr. Wayman. I believe I told my husband about it, but I am not sure of that. I was at the inquest at the Cock Inn, but when there I did not tell anything about the conversation I have just related about Maria and the child. I was not examined by Mr. Wayman, at the time he came to Mr. Gordon's after the inquest.

By Mr. *Kelly*.—When I was examined before the Coroner, I do not remember that anybody put a question to me about the conversation I had with Corder. Nothing was asked of me, except about the spade.

By Mr. *Broderick*.—There is another cottage joins mine, and another between a quarter and half a mile from the Red Barn.

*Rachael Burke* examined by Mr. *Andrews*.—I live in a farm-house at Polstead. The prisoner once came to me and said that Maria Marten would not be my mistress, as she was gone over to France in a steam-packet.

*William Marten* examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I am first cousin to the deceased. I know the prisoner at the bar. I had some conversation with Corder last year, concerning Maria Marten, at the latter end of the harvest, but I do not know the month, except it was September. I asked Corder where



she was, and told him I understood she was living at Sudbury. He said "No, she is not, but I can see her at any time I please." At this time I stood within two rods of the prisoner's house, and he gave me a pint of harvest beer at the time. He told me to make haste and drink it, and not talk out, for fear the people in-doors might hear what was said. This was while I was talking on the subject of Maria Marten.

*Francis Stow* examined.—I am a labourer at Polstead, and harvested at Mrs. Corder's last year and William paid us. He did not give us many orders what to do. I know the Red Barn. Last year the first corn which was taken off Mrs. Corder's land was put there. The prisoner was in the barn when the first or second load of wheat was put in. He came in while we were "*un-pitching*" it. The first part of the corn was put over the place where the body was found, but I am not aware that the prisoner gave any orders upon that subject. One day in harvest time the prisoner came to me and said he would give me a one-pound note if I would cut his throat; he appeared smiling at the time, and I considered it a joke; but I said "Master, how can you talk so."

Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—My wife, who has been examined, did not tell me anything about the spade, nor did I miss it. I never said anything about the one-pound note until I heard about this matter. I was never examined more than once previous to my coming before the Grand Jury.

*William Marten* recalled by Mr. *Broderick*.—I was not examined before the Coroner's Jury—never, indeed, before I came here, either before a magistrate or otherwise.

*William Towns* examined by *Mr. Kelly*. I am a labourer at Polstead, and have been many years in the employ of the Corder family. The prisoner had assisted in the management of the farm. I know the Red Barn very well ; I assisted in filling it with corn last harvest, some time in August 1827. I saw wheat put in by order of William Corder. He told me to get up the wheat in America Hill field, and put the corn in the right hand bay. [The witness here pointed to the model, and described that he meant the bay where the body was discovered.] Wheat had been generally put into that bay for years ; the bottom of the bay was covered with straw before the wheat was put into it. I cannot tell how long it had been emptied of corn before the straw was put in. The corn which had been put in in the harvest before (1827) was thrashed out before Stoke fair, which begins on the 16th of May. I thrashed the last wheat myself, and made up twenty-eight coomb. I began it in February and finished it in March last, as I cleared the sheaves away I began to spread the straw in the right bay. In doing this I did not remove the litter so as to see the ground.

By *Mr. Broderick*.—It is a usual thing to place straw in a bay in which wheat is put. I have known William Corder eighteen years.

*Mr. Broderick*.—As you are here I'll ask you—Have you not always known him a kind-hearted young man ?

*Witness*.—I never saw him out of temper ; he was very good to me indeed. I have laboured for his family eighteen years. The prisoner lost three brothers last year, and his father the year before.



Mr. *Pryke* examined. I am farming bailiff to the prisoner's mother, and remember William Corder going from Polstead. I drove him to Colchester on that occasion, on or about the 18th of September. While we were going along, I had a conversation with him respecting the business; as I was about to take the management of the farm, it was necessary we should do so. Maria Marten's name was then mentioned. The prisoner said that he had not seen her since May; he spake very highly of her, and said nothing more. I assisted Thomas Marten in searching the Red Barn. I do not recollect any more conversation on the way to Colchester between me and William Corder relative to Maria Marten. When I was in the barn with Thomas Marten I discovered the place where the body was laid. I had a rake in my hand which assisted me in removing the earth from off the body, which I found lying on its right side, doubled up. I attended the barn again on the Sunday morning, when the coroner's jury were there. The barn was locked up by me on the over night, and I kept the keys in my own possession. I found the body in the same state as when we left it on the over night.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*. When I drove William Corder over to Colchester, he had been ill some time, and the doctor had attended him. He spoke of Maria Marten as being a well-deserving girl, in terms of tender affection. I was at the Coroner's inquest; they never asked me a question, although I was present the whole day, and heard most of the witnesses examined. An application was made for the prisoner to be present, but he was not allowed.

Mr. *Broderick*. My Lord, this is the most extraordinary case I ever heard of. Is it not strange that

such a witness as this should not be examined before the Coroner? who, by the way, I ought to mention, refused to allow the attendance of the prisoner during the inquest over which he (Mr. Wayman) presided; so that your Lordship will observe, that my client is put to the bar upon his trial, and for the first time to hear the evidence adduced against him. How, I would ask, is a man so circumstanced to defend himself against accusations which involve not his liberty but his life?

*Lord Chief Baron.*—Is it not very unusual for the prisoner to be excluded on such occasions?

*Mr. Broderick.*—Very unusual, indeed, my Lord! and it is, likewise, very unusual for a coroner, who sat in such a cause, to conduct the prosecution afterwards, as an attorney for the prosecution against the prisoner, who had been so excluded. Most unusual, too, is it, I apprehend, that the Coroner, while acting as such attorney, should, himself, in a private room, without the prisoner's having any notice of it, examine the witnesses on oath, and collect their evidence, no magistrate being present.

*Mr. Wayman* rose to state—that when the inquest sat, the prisoner was attended by Mr. Humphreys, a very respectable solicitor, from London; and it was by that gentleman's request that the prisoner did not stop in the room to hear the depositions read over to him.

*Mr. Broderick.*—We have no evidence of that fact: we have not got Mr. Humphreys here to prove it\*.

\* As to whether the law, as it now stands, in relation to Coroners, is imperfect, we are not aware; but we subjoin, in



Examination resumed by Mr. *Andrews*.—I was at the Cock, at Polstead, before the Coroner, by whom I was sworn, and no magistrate was present. William Corder was always considered by me as a kind-hearted young man.

Mr. *Broderick*.—Pray, Sir, had you not got a person preaching about this murder, in or near this very barn?

The *Lord Chief Baron*.—What do you mean by preaching—is it a sermon you allude to?

Mr. *Broderick*.—Yes, my Lord, and to a congregation of several thousands of persons, which were specially brought together, after regular notice in the parish, to hear the prisoner at the bar described as the murderer of this unfortunate girl.

The *Lord Chief Baron*.—You do not mean a clergyman of the church of England?

Mr. *Broderick*.—No, my Lord, I understand it was a dissenter. Pray, Mr. Pryke, what was the name of this preacher?

Mr. *Pryke*.—I understood his name was Young, and that he came from London.

Mr. *Broderick*.—This is not all, my Lord—for, in the very neighbourhood, and, indeed, in all parts of the country, there have been puppet-shows representing this catastrophe\*.

another part of this volume, two articles, which give different views upon the subject, and one of them, at all events, goes to prove that Mr. Wayman strictly obeyed the letter of the law at the inquest upon Maria Marten.

\* See p. 70.

Mr. *Andrews*.—I wish to say a few words in respect to the conduct of the Coroner.

Mr. *Broderick*.—I object, my Lord, to my learned friend being heard, unless he produces the Coroner as a witness, and to that I can have no objection.

Lord *Chief Baron*.—But I have—for the matter has nothing to do with this trial, and we have enough to do without it. It may be an imputation upon the character of the Coroner, perhaps; but we are not sitting in judgment to try whether it be just or unjustly founded.

Mr. *Andrews*.—It was arranged between the Coroner and Mr. Humphreys, who at first attended as the prisoner's solicitor, that though Corder was not allowed to be present at the inquest, the depositions were afterwards read over to him. I believe, my Lord, that this is the usual practice on those occasions.

Mr. *Prendergast*.—The practice is directly the contrary, and so are the words of Lord Coke.

Mr. *William Chaplin* examined.—I am overseer of Polstead, and produce two letters which I received from Thomas Marten.

Mr. *Broderick*.—As well as being churchwarden of Polstead, are you not the prosecutor in this cause?—I am.

Did you hear the parson preach in or near the barn?—No, certainly not, but I heard of the occurrence.

And you took no steps to prevent it?—No, I did not.

Are there not exhibitions going about the neigh-



bourhood, representing Corder as the murderer?—I have heard so.

And you have not interfered to prevent them. Is there not a camera obscura near this very hall at this moment, exhibiting him as the murderer?—There is a camera obscura, I believe, about the streets, but I do not know the nature of the exhibition; neither am I aware that I have any power to prevent them in my own parish, much less in this town.

*Thomas Marten* recalled.—These are the letters I gave to Mr. Chaplin, and the same I received from the prisoner; and they are addressed to me.

The following letters (marked I. and II.) were then put in and read by the clerk, *William Gardner* having proved them to be the prisoner's hand writing.

I.

*“ London, Bull Inn, Leadenhall-Street,  
Thursday, 18th Oct.*

“ THOMAS MARTEN,

“ I AM just arrived at London upon business respecting our family affairs, and am writing to you before I take any refreshment, because I should be in time for this night's post, as my stay in town will be very short—anxious to return again to her *who is now my wife*, and with whom I shall be one of the happiest of men. I should have had her with me, but it was her wish to stay at our lodging at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, which she described to you in her letter, and we feel astonished that you have not yet answered it, thinking illness must have been the cause. In that she gave you a full description of our marriage, and that Mr. Rowland was ‘daddy,’ and Miss, bridesmaid. Likewise told you they came with us as far as London, where we continued together very comfortable for three days, when we parted with the greatest regret. Maria and myself went on to the Isle of Wight, and they both returned home. I told Maria I should write to you directly I reached London, who is very anxious to hear from you, fearful that some

strange reason is the cause of your not writing. She requested that you would inclose Mr. Peter's letters in one of your own, should he write to you, that we may know better how to act. She is now mine; and I should wish to study for her comfort, as well as my own. Let us know all about Mr. Peter, and if you can possibly, write by return of post, and direct for Mr. W. C., at the above inn. Maria desired me to give her love to Nancy, and a kiss for her little boy, hoping that every care is taken of him; and tell your wife to let Nancy have any of Maria's clothes she thinks proper, for she says she has got so many they will only spoil, and make use of any she may like herself. In her letter she said a great deal about little Henry, who she feels anxious to hear about, and will take him to herself as soon as we can get a farm whereby we can gain a livelihood, which I shall do the first I can meet with worth notice; for living without business is very expensive; still provisions are very reasonable in the Isle of Wight, I think cheaper than any part of England. Thank God, we are both well, hoping it will find all you the same. We have been a good deal on the water, and have had some good sea sicknesses, which I consider have been very useful to us both—my cough I have lost entirely, which is a great consolation; in real truth, I feel better than I ever did before in my life, only in this short time. Maria told you, in her letter, how ill I was for two days, at Portsmouth, which is seven miles over the water to the Isle of Wight, making altogether one hundred and thirty-nine miles from Polstead. I would say more, but time will not permit; therefore, Maria unites with me for your welfare, and may every blessing attend you. Mind you direct, Mr. W. C. at the Bull Inn, Leadenhall-Street, London. Write to-morrow, if you can, if not, write soon enough for Saturday's post, that I may get it on Sunday morning, when I shall return to Maria directly I receive it. Inclose Mr. Peter's\* letters, and let us know whether he has acknowledged little Henry. You must try and read my scribble; but I am fearful that you will not make it out.

"I remain,

"Your well-wisher,

"W. C."

\* \* I think you had better burn all letters, after taking

\* By "Mr. Peter's letters," the writer made an allusion to Peter Matthews, Esq.



the directions, that nobody may form the least idea of our residence,—adieu.

*For*

Colchester,  
Py. Post.

Paid  
18 Oct 18  
1827

PostPaid.

*Thomas Marten,  
Polstead,  
Near Stoke by Nayland,  
Suffolk,  
with speed.*

## II.

*“ London, Monday, 23d, 1827.*

“ THOMAS MARTEN,

“ I received your letter this morning, which reached London yesterday, but letters are not delivered here on a Sunday—that I discovered by making inquiry, yesterday; however, I could not get through my business 'till this afternoon, and I am going down to Portsmouth by this night's coach. I have been this day to the General Post-office, making inquiry about the letter Maria wrote to you on the 30th of September, which you say never came to your hands. The clerk of the office traced the books back to the date it was wrote, and he said that a letter directed as I told him to you never came through their office, which I think is very strange; however, I am determined to find out how it was lost, if possible, but I must think coming over the water to Portsmouth, which I will inquire after to-morrow, when I hope to find out the mystery. It is very odd, I think, that letters should be lost in this strange way. Were it not for the discovery of our residence, I would certainly indict the Post-office, but I cannot do that without making our appearance at a Court Marshal, which would be very unpleasant to us both. You wish us to come to Polstead, which we should be very happy to do, but you are not aware of the danger. You may depend that if ever we fall into Mr. P.'s hands the consequence would prove fatal; therefore, should he write to you, or should he come to Polstead, you must tell him you have not the least knowledge of us, but you think we are gone into some foreign part. I think, if you do not hear from him before long, you had better write, and tell him that you cannot support the child without some assistance, for we are gone you know not where; if you tell him you hear from us he will force you to tell him where we

was, so I think it will be best for you not to acknowledge at all. I enclose one pound, and you shall hear from us again in a short time. This will not reach you before Wednesday morning, as I am too late for this night's post. You said your wife did not like to take any of Maria's clothes; she said, in her last letter, that any of her old clothes were at their service, I mean your wife and Nancy; but she should write again as soon as possible. I must now bid you adieu. The coach is starting in about ten minutes. I have been so much employed this day that I could not write before. Believe me to be your well-wisher for your future welfare,

“ W. M. C.”

Paid.  
23 Oct. 23  
1827.

*Mr. Thomas Marten,  
Polstead,  
Near Colchester*

Post paid.

#### EVIDENCE CONTINUED.

*Peter Matthews, Esq.* examined by *Mr. Andrews*.—I reside in London generally. I have some relations living at Polstead. I knew Maria Marten, and also William Corder who stands at the bar. I had known Maria Marten for some length of time before last year. I feel confident that the last time I saw her was on the 31st of August, 1826. I was at Polstead in the summer of last year, about July, 1827. At that time when I was on a visit, I saw and conversed with Corder twice; and I saw him a third time on the morning I went away.

I had a conversation on the subject of Maria Marten. The cause of the first interview was, I wished to see William Corder, respecting a note I had lost, and I made inquiry of him about it. It was a five-pound Bank of England note. I put a variety of questions to him, first of all, respecting it, which he answered falsely.

*Mr. Broderick*.—Sir, you must state the conversation and not the result.



Witness proceeded.—I inquired about the five-pound note, and the letter which I had sent to Maria Marten, and he said he knew nothing about it. I alluded to the letter which I sent on the 3d of January, 1827, in which a five-pound note was inclosed. His answer to the inquiry was, “I know nothing about it.” Before I left Polstead I had subsequent conversations with him relative to the same subject. In consequence of the conversation I had with him the first time, he either brought or sent a letter to Polstead Hall, but I was not there when it came.

Mr. *Broderick*.—I submit, my Lord, that this is not evidence that the letter alluded to came from the prisoner.

Chief *Baron*.—I don't think it very particular at present; but I'll notice the objection if you mean to raise it.

Examination continued.—I have a letter which I received from the prisoner in August, 1827, which I produce.—[The letter put in.]—I have never seen the prisoner write, nor did I ever correspond with him previous to this letter, but I have since. I have written to him since and got an answer. The letter resulting from that correspondence I believe to be his hand-writing. It refers to the letter wrote to me.

The witness *Gardner* recalled.—(Reluctantly) I believe this to be the prisoner's hand-writing.

[This letter was put in evidence.]

Its contents were very laconic, and alluded to the generous principles evinced by Mr. Matthews, for forbearing to prosecute him for “the enormous offence” of which he had been guilty.

Before the letter was read throughout,  
*Mr. Broderick* submitted, that this letter had no reference to the offence with which the prisoner stood charged.

*Court.*—Let the letter lie on the table for the present.

This was assented to, and it was not called for afterwards, but we annex a copy\*.

\* The following is a copy of the Letter, which was partly read in evidence, but withdrawn on the objection of *Mr. Broderick*. It was directed to

*Peter Matthews, Esq.*

*Bingfield, near Wokingham,  
 Berkshire.*

“SIR,

“After a long and wretched night of miserable reflection, I have at last endeavoured to collect my weary spirits, in order to fulfil your request, and humbly solicit you will pardon my addressing you personally upon the subject, as I am at a loss for one word on my own behalf, and, therefore, must depend entirely upon your merciful and generous principles, which I have already experienced in your promising to forgive the enormous crime, on condition that I would openly confess it.

“I will therefore, with the greatest possible humility, throw myself at your feet and implore your pardon, though, with a small degree of hope; for so heinous a crime as it appears to me now, I am convinced, deserves the greatest punishment, though at the time I did it, it seemed but a trifling thing:—such was the dreadful consequence of having associated myself with loose, unprincipled companions—a lesson which I have purchased at the expense of my peace. I am likewise plainly convinced of my great folly and weakness in attempting to deceive a gentleman of your penetration with lies and false pretensions, which, I am certain, does make me appear in blacker colours before you; but permit me to add, I beseech you, Sir, once more to implore your pardon, and allow me to add, that I shall never forget I owe my existence to your mercy and generosity, and as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

“The idea of the dreadful news reaching my poor, distressed mother, fills me with horror; on her account do I again entreat your mercy and forgiveness and remain

“Your most obedient and

“wretched servant

August 1st, 1827.

“W CORDER.”

To *Mr. Matthews,*  
*Polstead Hall.*



The following, however, to which no objection was raised by the prisoner's counsel, was then put in and read by the Clerk of Assize:—

*“ Sunday Afternoon, Aug. 26—27.*

“ SIR,

“ In reply to your generous letter, which reached me yesterday, I beg leave to inform you that I was indeed ignorant of Maria Marten's residence at the time you requested me to forward the letter I took from Bramford, and will candidly confess that Maria *have* been with a distant female relation of mine since the month of May. About five weeks ago they both went into Norfolk, to visit some of my kindred friends. On Friday week I received a letter from my kindred, who informed me that Maria was somewhat indisposed, and that they were then in a village called Heringby, near Yarmouth. I returned an answer by next post, and enclosed your letter for Maria, which I found reached her perfectly safe, as I took the Yarmouth coach last Wednesday, from Ipswich lamb fair, and went to Heringby; when I was sorry to learn that Maria's indisposition was occasioned by a sore gathering on the back of her hand, which caused her great pain, and prevented her from writing to you, as her fingers are at present immovable. Knowing you would be anxious to hear from her, I particularly wished her to write the first moment she found herself able, which she promised very faithfully to do. I gave her a very particular account of our dialogue at Polstead Hall, not forgetting the remarkable kindness I experienced from you, which I shall ever most gratefully acknowledge, and likewise return you my most grateful thanks for your goodness in respect to your enterprise on my account, when in London.

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Your most obedient and very humble servant,

“ W. CORDER.”

“ P.S.—I have already enclosed your letter for Maria in one of my own, which I shall post with this immediately; and beg permission to add, that I have fully determined to make Maria my bride directly I can settle our family affairs, which will be in about a month or six weeks time; till that time Maria wishes to continue with my kindred.

“ In concluding, if I can at any time render you any ser-

vice whatever, I shall be most happy to oblige, as I am truly sensible of your generosity."

*For*

*Peter Matthews, Esq.  
Binfield, near Wokingham,  
Berkshire.*

The following copy of Mr. Matthews's answer to Corder was also read, without any objection being made:—

*"Binfield, Sept. 2nd, 1827.*

"MR. WM. CORDER,

"I received your letter on Tuesday last, and thank you for forwarding my two enclosures. I was sorry to hear of the painful swelling on the back of Maria's hand, and from not hearing from her I fear that she is suffering much pain from it. I will thank you to add the necessary direction to the enclosed, and forward it to her immediately. Let me know her direction, that I may write to her, if necessary, without troubling you with the letters to forward for the future.

"From the postscript in your letter I am glad to find your willingness to make good your promises to Maria. I wish to be a friend to all, and with a sincere wish for her happiness and future interest, and with a friendly feeling for your own welfare, and for the sake of your worthy mother, who has recently suffered such heavy affliction in her severe bereavement of your father and three children.

"I am desirous of giving you and Maria friendly counsel upon the measure you have in contemplation. For the advantage, interest, and future happiness of all parties, my advice would be offered to you both; and after I had satisfactorily to my mind performed that kind duty, I should, with sincere good wishes for her happiness and your own, leave the matter to your own joint reflection and determination.

"Yours, &c.

"P. MATTHEWS."

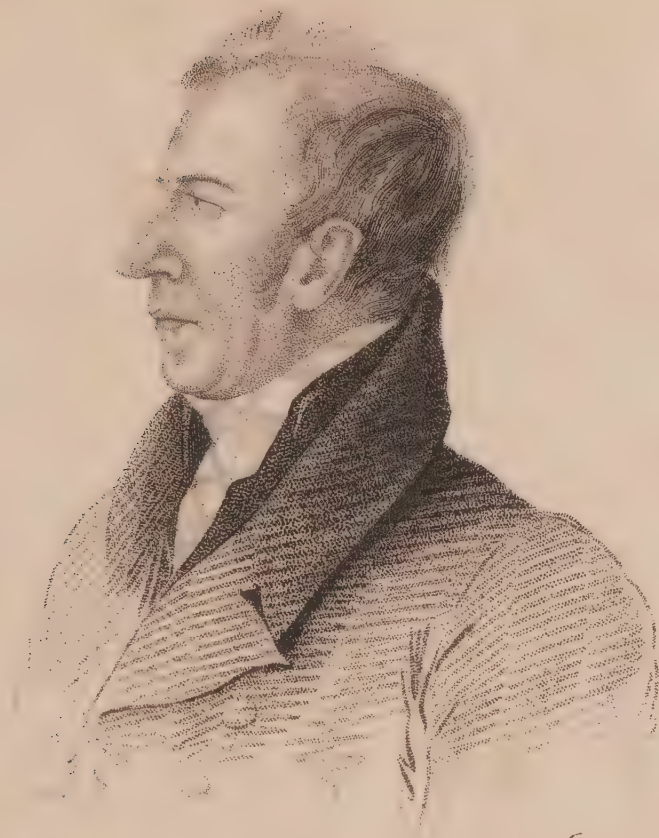
---

Mr. *Peter Matthews's* examination resumed.—On the 31st of July, last year, the prisoner stated to me, that Maria Marten was living somewhere about



the neighbourhood of Yarmouth. I took a memorandum of it at the time, which I now produce. The mention of her name was then connected with the five-pound note. I left Polstead on the 9th of August, in the morning. A letter was written by me on the previous day, to be sent to her. Corder said he did not know where to send it to, but he would forward it by the next post, if he could. He mentioned something about Brentford. I told him I must insist upon his forwarding the letter, as there appeared to be a great deal of concealment in the business. He then said, "Sir, I shall endeavour to do so." He repeated what he had said the night before, viz. that she lived, he believed, somewhere near Yarmouth, but he did not know the exact direction. I afterwards saw the prisoner in London; I met him near Somerset House, on the 19th of November. I asked him if he had forwarded the letter which I wrote to Maria Marten, and enclosed in one to him on the 2nd of September. The prisoner said "I have." I told him that I was very much surprised in not receiving any answer from the young woman. He either said "I have written an answer to you," or "I think I have." I told him, the only letter which I received from him was dated the 26th of August. I then asked the prisoner where Maria Marten then was? He said he had left her in the Isle of Wight. I told him that her father had written down to me once or twice respecting Maria, and that they were uneasy, not knowing where she was. I said, "Are you married to her yet?" He replied, "No; I have not settled my affairs at present, and that is the reason why I have not been married before." I think that I can speak positively to this conversation taking place on the 19th of November, because I left town on that day.

*James Lea examined by Mr. Andrews.—I am*



*W. Chaplin*



*James Lee officer*





an Officer belonging to Lambeth Street Police Office, London. I went down to Grove House, Ealing, the morning of the 22d April last, about ten o'clock. When I went into the house, the prisoner came out of the parlour into the hall in a hurried manner. I told him I had a little business to do with him, when he said, "Sir, walk into the drawing-room," and I went in. I then told him that I was an officer from London, and that I was come to apprehend him upon a very serious charge indeed, and that he must consider himself my prisoner. He replied "Very well." I told him the charge was respecting a young woman of the name of Maria Marten, with whom he had formerly kept company. I said, "She has been missing for a long time, and strong suspicions are attached to you." I said, "I believe you know such a person,—a young woman you formerly kept company with in Suffolk?" He said "No, I do not know such a person," adding, "You have made a mistake, I am not the person you want." I said, "No, I have not made a mistake, your name is Corder, and I am certain that you are the person I want." I told him also to recollect himself, for I had asked him twice, and I would repeat the question once more. "Did you not know such a person as Maria Marten?" The prisoner replied, "No, I never did;" so I did not press the question further. I then proceeded to search his person, and took from him a bunch of keys, and afterwards took him to the Red Lion at Brentford. On our way to the Red Lion, I told him that the body of the young woman was found in his Red Barn. He made no remark then, but after he had proceeded a short distance, he said, "When was the young woman's body found?" I told him last Saturday morning, but to this he made no reply. I left him at the Red Lion in custody, and went again to the house. When I entered, I saw Mrs.



Corder and her brother. She showed me up stairs, and I went into the dressing-room, and opened two writing desks with some of the keys I had taken from the prisoner.

Mr. *Broderick*.—There is no proof that the desks were his ; the mere fact of some keys being taken from him opening them, ought not to be given as evidence ; it is no assumption that they were his. If the prisoner had been by at the time, and acknowledged them to have been so, the case would have been otherwise.

The *Lord Chief Baron*.—It was his house, or place of abode, where they were found.

Mr. *Andrews*.—Let me proceed with the examination, and I'll obviate the difficulty.

Examination continued.—I had some conversation with the prisoner respecting some pistols which I found at his house. When I was taking him from Polstead to Bury Gaol, he said he would present them to me. He said he bought them at Ipswich when he was ten years of age.

[At this period of the trial, the noise and confusion outside the court were so great, that the business was suspended for a few minutes until the javelin-men went out to quell the riot, with an order to bring the offenders before the judge, who said he would certainly commit them to prison.]

When this conversation took place about the pistols, I had been examined before the Coroner, and signed my deposition. I took the prisoner into the room at the Cock to hear the depositions read, and mine was among the number. I found the pistols at Ealing, and they were in a black bag which hung upon a nail.

[The pistols had previously been produced in the black reticule, but ordered to be put by. Mr. Andrews now called for their production.]

*Mr. Broderick.*—I object to their being produced, as they do not appear to have been the prisoner's, or that they were found at his house—*non constat* that the house was the house of the prisoner, there being other persons living in it.

*Lord Chief Baron.*—Were they and the prisoner in the room at the same time?

*Witness.*—Yes, my lord.

*Judge.*—I think I should be straining the point very far if I were to reject this evidence; besides the prisoner made the pistols his own, or treated them as his own property, when he offered to make a present of them to Lea.

*Mr. Broderick.*—My lord, we have only Lea's evidence that such an offer was made; and without intending the slightest imputation upon his veracity, he is an interested witness.

*Mr. Andrews.*—Mr. Lea, did you not afterwards find a sword at the prisoner's house at Ealing?

*Mr. Broderick.*—Do you mean to press that question?

*Mr. Andrews.*—Of course I do.

*Mr. Broderick.*—Then I'll raise my objection at once; and I must refer again to the pistols.

*Court to Lea.*—Were the pistols at the Coroner's Inquest?—Yes.



Mr. *Broderick*.—Ay, but the prisoner was not there to see them.

*Witness*.—I think he must have known that I had them, because they lay about the room all the time I had him in custody.

*Court*.—Let the witness proceed.

*Witness* (continued).—I found this powder-flask, bullet-mould, and these bullets, with the pistol, in the bag. When I took the prisoner, I saw a sword hanging on a nail. After the prisoner was committed, I went again to Ealing, but it had been removed; but I found it, and have it now in my possession.

Mr. *Andrews*.—I shall not produce it at present, but call another witness.

Mr. *Robert Offord* examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I am a cutler, and live at Hadleigh. I know the prisoner at the bar. He came to me about the latter part of last March twelvemonth, or the beginning of April, I do not recollect which. He said, “Mr. Offord, I have got a small sword, which I wish to be ground as sharp as a carving knife, for to be used as such.” He wished it to be done that he might take it back again in the evening. He said, “I have a cousin about to marry in a short time.” I think he said in about a fortnight. I think I should know the sword again if I saw it.

[*Lea* here produced the sword, which was suspended to a white military belt.]

This witness deposed as follows:—I found this in the dressing-room, the second time I went to Ealing; the same room that I took the reticule from—it was in a trunk in the room.

*Robert Offord* (recalled).—I know this sword to be the one to which I have alluded. I know it by my own work. I ground it quite sharp, and it took me a great deal of labour to get it into that state. Corder did not stay while I ground it : he came for it about eight or nine in the evening, while I was at work. I am quite confident that this is the same sword.

[The instrument was about two feet in length, in the shape of an imperfect crescent, and remarkably well polished.]

Cross-examined by *Mr. Broderick*.—You have said that it was in March or early in April last year that you ground this sword : mind, I warn you well, you swear that it was not before Christmas, 1826.

*Witness*.—I will not. I do not keep a job-book ; I have been speaking by guess as to the time, and to the best of my recollection. I know I was working in the shop by candle-light when he called for it.

*Mr. Broderick*.—Well, but you work with candles at Christmas as well as in March?—Certainly.

By *Mr. Andrews*.—I know I was in the shop when the prisoner came for it. There were no marks upon the blade when he took it away. I perceive there are now two or three stains, and something like a scratch, upon it—a spot near the point, and some elsewhere. I will not positively swear that the spots near the point were not on it when I gave it to Corder, but there was no scratch.

*George Gardner* recalled by *Mr. Andrews*.—I have seen a sword like this in *Mrs. Corder's* house at *Polstead*.



Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I remember that there was an alarm that Mrs. Corder's house was expected to be robbed, and in consequence of that I think I sat up to watch in the spring of 1827. Corder had this sword in his room. We sat up several nights, as there had been several robberies in the neighbourhood.

Mr. *John Baalham* examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I am constable of Polstead. I know Corder very well; I also knew Maria Marten. I never had a warrant to apprehend her. I never told the prisoner that I had received one from Mr. Whitmore for that purpose. I produce some articles of dress, which were taken from the body when found in the barn. They were given me at the Coroner's Inquest, and they have been in my possession ever since.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—Although I had no warrant to apprehend the young woman, there was a report about the place that she would be taken up\*. I have known the young man at the bar all his life. I live only forty rods from his mother's house. I can give him the character of a kind-hearted, good-tempered young man.

*Henry Harcourt* examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I am a gun-maker, and live at Sudbury. I know Corder, the prisoner. In the month of February, 1827, he came to me, and brought a pair of pistols to be repaired. I cannot say whether the pistols now produced are the same, but I know they were percussion pistols, similar to those. Percussion pistols have been in vogue seven or eight years.

\* This report was occasioned by a conversation at a parish meeting held at the Cock, but such a thing was never contemplated, inasmuch as the girl had not applied for parochial relief, nor was she likely to do so.—Ed.

*Court.*—In vogue you say ; how long have they been invented ?

*Witness.*—I should think it is seven or eight years since I first saw anything of the kind \*.

*Mr. Broderick.*—I suppose you are a country gun-maker, then ?

*Witness.*—Yes, I am. When Corder took them away a young woman was with him, but I did not know her. She was not with him when he brought them. I never saw her call alone respecting them (the pistols).

*Thomas Akers* examined by *Mr. Andrews.*--I lived at Polstead in May of last year. I know when Stoke fair is. I know the Red Barn and Thistley Lay. About last Stoke fair time I was never across the Lay or a field near it with a pickaxe on my shoulder, or at any other time †. I had not during that summer been planting trees for Mr. Hoy, on what is called Hoy's Hill.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Broderick.*—I was at work in the neighbourhood of Polstead at that time, but I do not know what I was doing. I almost always worked with horses. I do not know whether, in the course of last year, I worked with a pickaxe at all. I wore a velveteen jacket that year, and so did William Corder sometimes.

\* The object of this inquiry was to falsify the statement of the prisoner, that he bought the pistols when he was ten years old—several years before percussion pistols were invented.

† Stoke is a pleasant village, about a mile from Polstead, where Sir W. Rowley has a fine seat and spacious park. An annual pleasure fair is held here, which is much frequented by the rustics of this part of the country. Maria Marten went from her cottage to her place of slaughter during this carnival, and hence it is that the witnesses' memory were much refreshed.



Mr. *John Lawton* examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I am a surgeon, and live at Boxford. I was present when the Coroner's Jury went to the body in the Red Barn. It was on Monday, the 20th of April. When I first saw it, the body had not been disturbed, but the earth had been removed from the top of it. It lay in a hole in the barn, where it had been buried, and was covered with straw when I first went in. It was in the further or right bay of the barn, as I went in from the yard. The body was then very much decomposed; but some parts more than others. From my examination of it, I should have said that it had laid nine or ten months in the ground, if I had known nothing about the time the deceased had been missing. There were stays, flannel petticoat, shift, a handkerchief round the neck, stockings, and garters, and high shoes, with a portion of a Leghorn bonnet, trimmed with black. (Produces a handkerchief.) This I found under the hips, and this (another handkerchief) I took off her neck\*.

[A number of other articles were produced, which were nearly undistinguishable as to material or form of article.]

This handkerchief, which I call a lawn one, was also found in the hole. There was the sleeve of a blue coat. The body was put into a sack, pieces of which I took off the body. The body was lying on its right side. The right hand was lying on the right breast. The left arm was lying across the breast, with the hand off. She was quite crowded down. It was the body of a female; a full-grown woman, and, as I should judge, about twenty-five years of age.

I examined the face, which was in a very bad

\* See p. 30.

state, and there was an appearance of blood about it on the right cheek. I found this striped handkerchief round the neck. It was drawn extremely tight, so as to form a complete groove round the neck. It was apparently done for the purpose, as if pulled by some person. It was drawn sufficiently tight to have killed any one—I mean to have produced strangulation. A man's hand might pass between the exterior and interior fold of the handkerchief. In the neck, I discovered the appearance of a stab about an inch in length, and perpendicular. I passed my finger through the wound, and found that it descended to the left side; but I cannot say what parts were particularly injured by it, the part was in so putrid a state. There was a wen about the middle of the neck; it is an enlargement of the gland, but the common people call it "a wen." There was an appearance of an injury having been done to the right eye, and the right side of the face, apparently. It appeared as if something had passed into the eye deep into the orbit, injuring the bone on the right side of the nose. It appeared as if it had been done by something having passed through the left cheek, and then passing out at the right orbit; and there was also a stab in the right eye. It appeared to me as if a ball had passed through the left cheek, removing the two last grinders. The brain of the deceased was in such a state that I could make nothing out of it. I do not think that a ball passing through as I have stated would have produced death. Not instant death of itself; but strangulation, and the stab in the neck, together with the ball would, if all concurring together. The bone which divides the nostril was completely removed out of its place and broken to pieces, apparently by a ball having passed through.

I opened the chest of the deceased, but I did not discover any injury there myself. There was an adhesion of the lungs to the membrane which lines



the ribs on the right side. This might have been produced by an inflammatory disease. A person in such a state would have complained of a cough and pain in her side. I found two small pieces of bone in the throat. It is possible that, the bones having been shattered so much, they might have fallen there in the progress of decomposition.

*By the Court.*—I think they were bones from the interior of the nose.

*By Mr. Kelly.*—The left hand was separated from the body, or the arm rather. It had the appearance of a skeleton hand, as the flesh was all off the bones, and must have been the effect of decomposition.

The left hand was much in the same state, though not so much separated. I should think the injury round the neck inflicted with the handkerchief would have caused death, but not the wounds without it, except from subsequent inflammation. They would not have caused instant death; but I will not speak positively. I have examined the body only once. I was out when it was disinterred, but I have seen the heart and ribs since. I have a portion of the head in my possession. The ribs and heart were brought to my house by Mr. Nairn, and Mr. Chaplin came in on the same morning. Upon my subsequent inspection, I found something had penetrated between the fifth and sixth ribs, and there was a stab in the heart which exactly corresponded with the wound in the ribs. It appeared to have been inflicted with a sharp instrument, and that injury alone would have been, in my opinion, sufficient of itself to produce death. I found a corresponding mark upon the shift, which, upon opening, I found corresponded in size with those in the ribs and heart. I did not see any such mark on the stays. The cut was in the left side of the shift.

The stays were too much decayed for me to find a corresponding mark in them, supposing there had been one originally. There is a short sword which I have fitted into the wound. It exactly corresponds with it and the cut in the shirt. It must have penetrated two or three inches. (Sword produced to witness.) This is the instrument I have alluded to. When applied, it passed down the wound nearly three inches. I found one part of the wound wide, and the other narrow, so as to correspond with the wound in the side. The ribs were in a tolerable state of preservation, as was the heart. It appeared as if the wound in the heart had been done by an instrument like this sword—or one of this description. I fitted it also in a wound in the *spheroidal sinus*. It penetrated into that about a quarter of an inch. I have examined the wound in the head, and compared it with a bullet.

The *Lord Chief Baron*.—Then was a bullet found in the wound?

Mr. *Broderick*.—Nothing of the sort, my lord.

Mr. *Andrews*.—My lord, it is the bullet found by Lea. in the reticule.

*Court*.—What, in the Red Barn?

Mr. *Andrews*.—No, my lord, at Ealing, in the bag which contained the pistols.

*Witness* (continued).—The bullet fitted the hole, and as I passed it through it, it appeared to have been perforated with a ball of that size. I think the ball was fired before the stab with the sharp instrument. My reason for thinking so is, because I consider that the ball alone would not have killed her; but I could not tell this from any appearance



of the body: it is my own opinion only. I have already spoken to various parts of the clothes. I saw some blood on the stays, shift, the handkerchief round the neck, the lawn handkerchief, and apparently on the bonnet. I do not recollect any part of a shawl. I took the garters off, which were made of narrow white tape. While I was observing the shoe, one of the feet came off at the ankle. The lower and upper jaw had each a tooth out, but I cannot speak positively on which side of the left jaw. The one was missing; that missing from the right jaw had, I think, been out some time. I am able to distinguish between the cavity of a tooth extracted while the party lived, from one which would fall out by natural decay, or from decomposition after death.

I have the head here, and produce it\*. This is the jaw, and there are two teeth gone. I think, but am not positive, that one of the teeth fell out after death—the other has been out much longer.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I am thirty years of age next October. I have practised twelve

\* When the witness produced this relic of frail mortality, and fixed the under jaw (which was separate) it did not exhibit a very ghastly appearance, owing to the pearly whiteness and beautiful regularity of the teeth; but it nevertheless produced a thrilling sensation throughout the court—indeed, how could it be otherwise with any one who reflected, that a few months ago it exhibited the features of the beautiful Maria Marten; and moreover, that it was now produced to grin a ghastly smile upon her faithless lover, and murderer? Had these dry bones been able to have performed their former functions in the power of articulation, they might have sung,

“In youth, when I did love, did love,  
Methought it was very sweet;”

and then in frantic yells have exclaimed, “Vengeance, retribution. Lord avenge me of my adversary.”

From the close and attentive view which I took of Corder, when the skull was produced and handed about the court, I am able to state that he stood unmoved, nor was a muscle of his face indicative of flexibility.

months for myself. I was six years with Mr. Mudd, of Gedding; besides which I have been in London, and seen dead bodies dissected, but never one which had been buried nine or ten months. I did not observe the stab in the neck, or the pistol bullet, when in the barn. The body was not so much decomposed as might have been expected\*. The feet and hands were very much decomposed; and one came off. I have mentioned the result of my observations both in the barn and since. I could not clean the bones sufficiently to examine them minutely in the barn, as I could afterwards. I did not observe the stab in the ribs when I was in the barn. There was flesh on the bones then, so that it would be impossible to discover an internal injury; there was flesh on the face, but greatly decomposed. The wound gaped, which is a reason why I think it was inflicted during life.

Mr. *Broderick*.—How could you tell whether a wound had been made before or after the death of the party?

*Witness*.—For the reason I have stated: wounds inflicted in life gape open, which is not the case when made in putrid flesh. I have opened the chest and abdomen myself, at which time I made one wound on the heart.

By the *Judge*.—Not the wound I have been speaking of. The wound I was speaking of was on the right ventricle.

By Mr. *Broderick*.—The wound I first alluded to was near the apex of the heart, between the right and left ventricle. There is a partition between

\* This was accounted for from the peculiar nature and dryness of the soil, which was principally loam and gravel stones.



the right and left. I did not see any other injuries than those I have described ; none made with a spade. The weight of the body might have tightened the handkerchief in that way round the neck. I mean, supposing that the body had laid down, and any person had put their hand there to raise it up \*. When I took the shift from the body I saw no mark upon it ; it was produced at the Cock at Polstead. I did not look for it till I had discovered the wound in the heart and ribs. I can't tell whether they were there or made afterwards, of my own knowledge. I did not see them, although I examined the body. My judgment is formed from my own observations, unmixed with any thing I have heard since. I can speak with certainty that the ball came out of the eye, from the manner in which the bones are driven in. I can tell what course the ball would take. The bones were very much shattered. When before the Coroner, I could not tell whether the bones had not fallen from decay of the part. I told Mr. Wayman, then, that I could not speak with certainty whether the cheek was injured at all.

Re-examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I went apprentice when I was fifteen, and I am thirty years old next October. I have seen the dissection of many dead bodies. I could distinguish between a wound inflicted upon a dead body and one several months before. I believe none of the wounds to which I have spoken were done when the body was dug up. My attention was not called to that part of the body where the ribs were. I did not examine the hips very particularly. The wound on the neck might have been caused if the body had been lifted up by the external fold of the handkerchief soon after death. Different parts of the body were in different

\* In Corder's confession, he states it to be his belief that, after the murder, he removed the body to the hole, by dragging it by this handkerchief.

degrees of decomposition ; the wrists and feet were more so than some other parts. After cleaning the bones, I could perceive the injuries better than I could before. I allude now to the bones of the head ; and I have no doubt but the wound was done with a bullet at some time or other.

Mr. *Andrews*.—I shall now call another medical gentleman, who will corroborate part of the statement of Mr. Lawton, and state his own observations.

The *Lord Chief Baron*.—Mr. Andrews, after the great fatigue that we have all undergone during the day, do you propose to go any further to-night ? I had already conceived that the last gentleman would not be the only medical witness you would call.

Mr. *Andrews*.—My Lord, I have certainly other members of the medical profession to call in confirmation, and not only medical witnesses, but others, whose testimony will be necessary to identify the clothes and other articles found on the body of the deceased, in order to prove that they belonged to Maria Marten.

*Lord Chief Baron*.—I think, in such a case as this, the hour has arrived when we ought to adjourn the Court, as it is quite evident that we cannot finish the trial to-night. There are several witnesses to be examined for the prosecution, and, if I understand right, (but of that I know nothing,) a defence of considerable length is to be delivered by the prisoner. After that had been done, I should have to charge the jury ; and, to say nothing of other inconveniences to public justice, I must observe that, at the end of that time, I should scarcely be in a condition to make such observations upon the evidence



as, in an important case like this, would naturally be expected from me. In a civil case, where property only was at stake, I might have perhaps felt inclined to have gone on with the trial to-night ; but, in a case of such solemn importance to the prisoner at the bar, and of such great importance to the public in general, I cannot presume to enter upon an analysis of evidence so voluminous as this will be, when every one, as well as myself, must labour under extreme fatigue. Under these circumstances, let the Court be adjourned until to-morrow morning.

The Jury, who had a comfortable room provided for them by the High Sheriff, were then conducted to it, after the officer had solemnly sworn not to let them have communication with any one.

Throughout the day, the prisoner had maintained an air of indifference to his awful situation, with a smile generally playing upon his features ; but his eye had a heavy fixedness, and he appeared to have lost a considerable part of his confidence at the close of the day. This alteration, however, we attribute more to the fatigue incident to his situation, than to any other cause. His eye was intensely fixed on Mr. Lawton during his long examination ; and when that gentleman came down to the body of the court, and stood near him, the prisoner sent towards him one of his peculiar and piercing glances. He also manifested unusual emotion when Lea, the officer, was delivering his evidence relative to the pistols. The prisoner stamped his foot violently on the floor, and muttered that he (Lea) would swear any thing.

The adjournment took place at a quarter to seven o'clock, until nine on the following morning.

Ladders were raised, and numbers (ladies among

the rest) actually mounted the tiling of a house, from whence they could obtain an indistinct view of the prisoner. In the ceiling of the Court is a circular aperture for the admission of air, which is usually closed by two flap-doors. Either by fee, or by stealth, numbers of persons got up thither, and contented themselves with lying flat upon the joists of the building, to peep over the edge of the cornice; and, upon looking at them from beneath, they appeared like a number of bodiless and wingless angels, which sometimes, in graphic illustrations, surround a glory. Upon discovering the intruders, Mr. Orridge commanded them to withdraw, or otherwise the ceiling would certainly fall, and the consequences would be dreadful, not only to them, but to the persons in the gallery. The mandate having been obeyed, an officer was stationed to prevent a recurrence of the evil. The anxiety during the day to see Corder was extreme, but orders had been given not to let females into the Court—these orders were strictly attended to, excepting as they regarded the lady of the Sheriff's, Chaplain, and two others, who found their way to the Bench. The ladies, however, were determined not to be disappointed; for a number of them, and among them persons of consideration, stood, at the risk of their lives, on the stone ledges and basements of the windows of the Court. During the day, there was a dreadful thunder-storm, and the rain poured down in torrents upon their umbrellas, which more than once caused the Judge to direct his eyes to the large window behind him to ascertain the cause: while riding habits drenched, and veils, lately flowing, become twisted like a piece of tarpauling, in consequence of the pitiless storm, could not damp the curiosity of those beautiful spectators. Several of the side windows were broken, from the pressure of the throng, upon which they were ordered to



be cleared. Corder was then conducted from the bar to the door of the Court, where a common taxed cart awaited his arrival, and which he mounted with alacrity; when the Governor, and one of his keepers, placed themselves on either side, and hastily drove off, amidst some yells, groans, and hisses, but the object of execration was quickly far away from those discordant sounds.

On his arrival at the gaol, he partook of a hearty refreshment, and was subsequently visited by his legal advisers, as they had agreed to meet this evening to arrange as to the line of defence which the prisoner should adopt\*.

\* There was a remarkable circumstance connected with the defence of Corder. Mr. Humphreys, it will be recollected, was the first solicitor employed for the defence; and, perhaps, there is not in the country a man better qualified to do the business of the criminal courts. In arranging the matter of the defence, Mr. Humphreys, on being asked by Corder's friends his advice as to various points, said, that he wished his client to hold his tongue, and to leave every thing to his counsel. This advice was not at all relished. Mr. Charnock, who has been long acquainted with Corder's friends, and who interested himself greatly in the case, advised the course which was afterwards adopted—that the prisoner should tell the story of the suicide. In the opinion that this would be the most advisable plan of defence, all the friends of the murderer acquiesced, and Mr. Humphreys was requested to draw up an address upon that foundation. To this proposition, Mr. Humphreys would by no means agree. He said he considered it a most desperate course, and would by no means conduct the case if it was intended to plead suicide. "What, then," said the friends of Corder, "shall be said?—Something must be said—he can't be silent." Mr. Humphreys said that he was willing to let his client defend himself, upon the ground of provocation in the Red Barn, and that might induce the jury to reduce the crime of murder to manslaughter.

This mode of defence would, he thought, give Corder a much better chance of his life than the mere pretence that the unfortunate girl killed herself. "He might say that angry words took place—that the deceased struck him, and that she was levelled in her turn by a blow which proved fatal. Let him not say with what instrument he struck the blow. This appears to be the only chance, if you persist in your plan of obliging him to make

a defence himself." Mr. Charnock, although he had a very high opinion of the talents of Mr. Humphreys, preferred the plea of suicide, and all the friends of Corder approved of the suggestion which denied that he had any guilt upon him. Mr. Humphreys then declined acting. His powerful assistance was, however, found to be very necessary in the course of the trial, and a large fee was offered him to undertake the defence ; but Mr. Humphreys considered that the friends of Corder would, if he undertook the case, throw upon him the whole responsibility, in the event, which was considered very probable, of a conviction.

Mr. Humphreys was requested to obtain the best legal assistance at the most moderate rate. He first applied to Mr. Adolphus, and was asked two hundred guineas, exclusive of expenses, retaining fee, and fee for his clerk. Mr. Sergeant Andrews was next applied to ; he agreed to take one hundred guineas, but afterwards declined going. Mr. Broderick was then solicited to leave his circuit, and undertake the defence, and he went down for one hundred and forty guineas, exclusive of the retaining fee, expenses, &c.

In proof of the correctness of our statement, we subjoin the correspondence consequent upon previous legal arrangements, and also the occasion which gave rise to that change. It appears that, when Mr. Humphreys sent the brief to Mr. Charnock for inspection, he made alterations in the margin, of which Mr. H. did not approve ; and this was the cause of the latter refusing to act.

It is proper to remark, however, that personally the best understanding has ever subsisted between Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Charnock.

*" Re Corder.*

" SIR,

" By the directions of Messrs. Appleby and Charnock, I have left Mr. Sergeant Andrews's brief, in which Mr. Charnock has made such observations as he thought might be useful for the assistance of counsel.

" As he has not yet quite settled the form of the address, and also thinks it would be better to have it separate from the brief, he has not sent it along with the brief, but will finish it as soon as he possibly can, and cause a fair copy to be made to accompany it.

" I have also brought a cheque for 140*l.*; but as you and Mr. Humphreys, jun. were both out, I have not left it.

" I am, Sir,

" (for A. and C.)

" Your obedient servant,

" WM. PINTER."

To

*C. Humphreys, Esq.*



“ *Rex v. Corder.*

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ I really do not understand your alterations in the brief; and as you seem to have a more perfect knowledge of the defendant's case, and the points in his favour, than I possess, you had much better prepare the briefs and conduct the defence, as I wish to decline, fearing harm may be done by two attornies interfering.

“ I, therefore, return the draft, and Mr. Andrews will give his answer to-morrow, which you shall have immediately I get it. It is a pity it has been so long delayed.

“ I am, gentlemen,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ C. HUMPHREYS.”

“ *Broadway, 22d July, 1828.*”

To

*Messrs. Appleby and Charnock.*

“ *Rex v. Yourself.*

“ SIR,

“ Mr. Charnock having waited on you, and received from you personally the instructions for your defence, and prepared a defence for you at the time of trial, he must be better acquainted with the whole of that defence than I possibly can be, not having had any communication with you since you were committed for trial, which I intended to have done, as I stated to Mr. Charnock, considering it absolutely necessary had I had to conduct your case. As it is the particular wish of yourself and your friends that that gentleman should attend your trial, it appears to me to be quite unnecessary for you or them being at the expense of two attornies attending on that occasion; I have, therefore, under these circumstances, returned the papers I had under my consideration, with such observations as occurred to me on your behalf, and decline further to proceed.

“ I beg you will accept my best wishes for your deliverance.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ C. HUMPHREYS.”

“ *Broadway, Ludgate-Hill, 24th July, 1828.*”

To

*Mr. W. Corder,*  
*Bury Gaol.*

“ P.S.—I shall send my account to Mr. Chanrock, who I dare say has your directions to discharge the same.

“ C. H.”

## SECOND DAY, AUGUST 8.

## POPULAR EXCITEMENT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the thousands who attended the open spaces around the court yesterday, for the purpose of getting in, went away disappointed, and the accidents which many experienced in the crowd, there appeared this morning to be no abatement of that intense desire and curiosity which pervaded the multitude on the preceding day. As early as six o'clock, the populace began to gather round the door, and soon after seven several obtained admission. The arrangements of this morning for the admission of the public were very different from what they were yesterday ; and this was almost, if not entirely, owing to the active interposition of the governor of the prison (Mr. Orridge), to whom every praise is due ; for his exertions had the effect of keeping the officers of the high sheriff and the special constables in their proper places—by which means the avenues leading to the court were preserved from that intolerable pressure which was consequent on the vast assemblage rushing forward yesterday when the doors were opened, with such tremendous force, that the limbs and even lives of the most athletic and agile were in considerable danger.

On the preceding day, the Lord Chief Baron was carried off his legs on his way from his carriage to the bench ; and we were told that he disavowed having given such directions as were imputed to him yesterday, and which necessarily led to a scene of confusion and uproar, exceeding any thing which we have hitherto witnessed on trials of this nature ; even that of Thurtell, notwithstanding that it took place within the vicinage of the metropolis, when com-



pared with the distance of Bury St. Edmund's. At all events, the public were this day afforded every reasonable accommodation, so far as the area of the court would admit; and in consequence of this a befitting regularity and solemnity attended the proceedings; the close of which a great number of ladies obtained admission to witness, which appeared to make amends for the severe disappointment which they had experienced on the first day of the trial.

The prisoner was brought down from the prison to the court in the same manner and by the same conductors as yesterday, but he did not appear to be in such good spirits, nor did he jump from the vehicle which conveyed him with the same agility. He was dressed exactly as before, excepting that he appeared to have exchanged silk for white cotton stockings. He, however, recognized several persons in the crowd, and spoke to two or three of them.

The prisoner, we were informed, rose early this morning, and before he was brought into court employed himself in perusing some important alterations, which had been introduced into his written defence, and which had been suggested to him late last night, by his counsel and solicitor. He afterwards ate a hearty breakfast.

At a quarter to nine o'clock he was put to the bar, when he appeared tolerably collected, but not in so much self-possession as on Thursday. He looked around with apparent cheerfulness several times, but his head was not so erect as before; and ere the judge took his seat, he plainly evinced that he was ill at ease, by heaving many deep-drawn sighs. Immediately on his being put to the bar, he put on his spectacles, and leaned his back against the pillar behind him, at the same time displaying an oscillating and swinging motion of his body.

## ENTRANCE OF THE JUDGE.

While the clock of St. Mary's was striking nine, the Lord Chief Baron entered the court, attended by the High Sheriff, his Chaplain, and a number of ladies of rank, for whom places on the bench had been reserved.

After taking his seat, his Lordship bowed respectfully to the jury, and expressed a hope that they had been as comfortably accommodated during the night as circumstances would admit.

The Foreman replied in the affirmative.

The Learned Judge then made polite obeisance to the ladies who occupied other parts of the court than the bench, and after a short lapse, Harry Edgell, Esq., the Clerk of Arraignment and Assize, called over the names of the Jurors, who all answered and the business was immediately resumed.

During the short interval between the arrival of the Judge and the calling of the witnesses, Corder drew his pencil and a slip of paper from his pocket, as if to write a note to his solicitor, but which he did not then use.\*

\* Several of the public journals have asserted that, during the trial, the prisoner often took a small penknife from his waistcoat pocket, for the purpose of pointing his pencil; and some oblique hints were thrown out that the person in whose custody he was should not have permitted the use and possession of such an instrument. We take upon ourselves to deny the truth of the statement, because the person who pointed the prisoner's pencil is well known to us, and who also rendered him other little services during the trial. But supposing the fact to have been as stated, we are not aware that, *previous to conviction*, the law authorizes a gaoler to prevent a prisoner from having a knife in his possession—if there be such an enactment, we can only say, and speak from experience, that its breach (whether honourable or otherwise) is as frequent as its observance.



EVIDENCE FOR THE CROWN.—*Continued.*

Mr. *John Charles Nairn* was the first witness called, and examined by Mr. *Andrews*.—I am a surgeon. I have practised more than twelve months on my own account. I have been in the profession upwards of twelve years. On the 19th of last May, I attended at Polstead with Mr. Chaplin, a gentleman also in the profession, for the purpose of disinterring the body of the deceased\*. John Baalham, the constable and parish clerk, was present with us. He disinterred the body in my presence, and I examined the cavities of the chest of the body so disinterred.

Mr. *Broderick*.—My Lord, before this inquiry is proceeded in, you will direct, I trust, that the body be identified.

*Court*.—Certainly.

Mr. *Andrews*.—Then I will call Baalham.

*John Baalham* called in and examined.—I am parish clerk of Polstead, as well as constable. I saw the body taken up in the Red Barn, and the same was buried in Polstead Churchyard. I was not present when the body was so put into the grave, because I was forced to go to the Cock public house, to attend the Coroner. Before I went, I screwed it down. The Reverend Mr. Whitmore (the Rector of the parish) was present

when I did so. I knew the coffin to be the same when I took it up again. A person of the name of Nairn, as I understood, was present when I took

\* This was exactly a year and a day after the unfortunate Maria was murdered.

it up. I mean the gentleman who now stands by me in the witness box. The coffin I took up contained the same body which was brought from the Red Barn.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I saw the body in the barn. I have stated that I was not present when it was interred. I put the remains into the coffin myself. I know the coffin taken out to be the same.

Mr. *Nairn* re-examined.—The body I examined was the same as has just been described by Baalham. The internal parts of the chest I found in a good state of preservation, so much so, that any injury which had taken place in the cavity, by penetrating into it, might have been observed. Upon looking into the chest, the heart was found lying divested of its enveloping membrane. I discovered a large wound at the back of the right ventricle. It appeared to be a recent wound, but I cannot speak positively as to that, but that is my opinion; and I formed it when I first saw it. I then examined the vessels, and laid it aside for further and more minute examination. I next examined the external surface of the ribs, and in the space between the fifth and sixth ribs, I discovered a wound which appeared to be about three-quarters of an inch broad. My opinion was, that it was a wound of long duration, and not one recently inflicted. After I returned home, I again examined the heart, when I discovered a slight wound on the apex corresponding with the external wound between the ribs. It appeared to me to have been inflicted with a sharp instrument. I should think a dagger or sword.

*William Lea* recalled to produce the sword he



brought from Ealing, and which he put into the hands of the witness under examination.

Mr. *Nairn* (continued).—I have seen this sword before, and I consider it as the instrument most likely to have inflicted such a wound. Supposing such a wound had been inflicted upon a living body it would, in my opinion, have been sufficient to have caused death. I have since inspected the head of the disinterred body, and have also applied this sword to the wound between the ribs, and it corresponds with the wound to the extent of two or three inches. There appear to me to be some marks, or discolouration, on the back of the sword blade, which go to the extent I have last named. Having this sword with me, I examined the wound in the heart, and I consider that it might certainly have been made with the point of it. On afterwards examining the head, I traced the progress of a ball entering into the interior and back part of the upper jaw, and proceeding to the internal angle of the right eye. From the size of the opening, I should conclude it to have been a small pistol ball. This wound might have caused death, or she might have survived it. Upon further examination, I discovered a fissure opening into the sphenoidal sinus, or base of the skull, corresponding with the vertebræ. This fissure was occasioned by some sharp instrument; any sharp-pointed instrument would have produced it. It extends about a quarter of an inch into the sphenoidal sinus. I am not myself aware of any other wound in the head. The sword corresponds with the wound in the sphenoidal sinus, and it might have occasioned death.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I examined the body on the 19th of May, in this year. It

was about a month after it had been discovered in the barn.

*Mr. Broderick.*—Would not the original disinterment of the body, and consequent exposure to the air, while lying on the ground, have caused, in the course of another month, much additional decomposition?

*Witness.*—My opinion is that it would not; but I never saw a body before, which had lain so long in the ground.

*Court.*—You mean, you never saw one for the purpose of dissection or examination?

*Witness.*—Yes, my Lord.

Cross-examination continued by *Mr. Broderick.*—When I examined the heart, I found it divested of the pericardium, and a wound in it.

*Mr. Andrews.*—And the sword now produced corresponds with it?

*Witness.*—Yes.

*Mr. Broderick.*—Yes—and so might a sharp-pointed knife.

*Witness.*—The wound was done by an instrument, and not by decomposition. Looking merely at the heart, and knowing nothing of the circumstances I have now heard, I should say, that the wound in the right ventricle of the heart was a recent one. I judge partly from the evenness of the edges.



*Court.*—You think the wound you now allude to was a recent and not an ancient wound?

*Witness.*—I do, my Lord.

By Mr. *Broderick.*—I should have been of opinion, independent of anything but the inspection of the heart itself, that one of the wounds was a recent one, and the other more ancient, because the smaller wound of the two had gaping edges. From the nature of the wound, I do not think that it had been inflicted when the pericardium was removed. The apex of the living heart touches the ribs just under the cartilages. The cartilages connect the ribs with the sternum and with each other. In dead bodies, the cartilages are elastic. I should be of opinion, that a wound after death would not have the same appearance as if it was inflicted during life.

The bones of the head were not in the least state of decomposition. The only parts which were out of their places, were those which, in my opinion, arose from wounds inflicted by a bullet. I cannot speak of the face, as I did not see it when the body was first taken up in the Red Barn. The first time I saw the head was after the exhumation of the body. Mr. Lawton showed it to me after the disinterment. I did not see it severed from the body,—nor do I know, of my own knowledge, that it was that which was taken from the Red Barn. I took the heart from the body myself. A knife would have inflicted the wound I saw upon it.

By Mr. *Andrews.*—I do not mean a knife of any size; but one which would correspond in breadth of blade with this sword. The wound was broader at that part of the ribs nearest the sternum—broader on one side than on the other.

Mr. *John Lawton* recalled.—The head I showed to the last witness was the same I took from the body found in the Red Barn. I took it off when I assisted in removing the body in the barn. I then gave it to Baalham, the constable, who returned it to me after a short time. He returned it a day or two after. I took it off and delivered it to him. I am quite sure it was the same head which I showed to Mr. Nairn\*.

*John Baalham* recalled.—The same head which was taken from the body in the barn and given to me, I returned to him again afterwards.

Mr. *Henry Robert Chaplin* examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I have been practising as a surgeon for four years—three years in Dispensary practice and one for myself. I saw the disinterred body of the deceased woman in company with Mr. Nairn. I examined the chest, and found it in a good state of preservation. I examined the heart and found wounds the first of which was on the right ventricle. That wound appeared to have been recently inflicted. I discovered it when Mr. Nairn opened the body. I afterwards found another wound in the heart, which I examined, but I could not tell, from its appearance,

\* While the examination was proceeding about the head, and while it was exhibited in Court, the prisoner hastily put on his spectacles, and wrote a note to Mr. Broderick, his learned counsel, in reference to some part of the evidence. The learned gentleman immediately wrote a reply, which the prisoner read with close attention; after which, Mr. Broderick told him to destroy it, and the prisoner tore the note into small fragments, and cast them at his feet. Mr. Charnock, about this time, came to the bar, and held a long conversation with him at the front of the dock. This conversation has given rise to several conjectures, one of which is, that the prisoner signified his wish to stop the inquiry by pleading Guilty, and retracting his first plea.



whether it was recently inflicted or an ancient wound. I examined the ribs, and I found a transverse wound situated between the fifth and sixth ribs, which appeared to have been inflicted with a weapon with a broad back and sharp edge. I did not see the sword fitted to that wound. I consider, from appearances, that the wound in the heart is a continuation of that between the fifth and sixth ribs. The wound in the heart might have been inflicted while stripping the pericardium from it; but if the wound be a continuation of that between the ribs, that could not have been so. Such a wound is what is deemed a mortal wound; but whether, in this instance, it would have produced death I do not know—there are exceptions. I should think it more than probable that the wound would have been mortal, but I will not swear it. I have since inspected the head in the presence of Mr. Lawton, in whose possession it was. I found an appearance of a bullet having traversed from the posterior molares to the orbit on the other side. From my judgment, that appearance could not have been produced by decomposition. I should think that would not have been a mortal wound with certainty—it might or it might not. I found also a thrust in the eye, as if done by a sharp instrument with a broad back, and might have been the same as inflicted that upon the heart. It is impossible to say whether the bullet made its entry into or its exit from the eye.

By the *Court*.—On the same eye which the ball had perforated. A wound might have been inflicted with the same instrument as in the ribs.

By Mr. *Broderick*.—If it was done with such an instrument as I have seen, it could not have perforated above the one-eighth of an inch. The in-

strument left an impression on the bone ; it must have been a very sharp-pointed instrument.

[The *Lord Chief Baron* desired the sword to be handed up to him, when he minutely inspected it.]

The *Witness* then explained to the Court, that the sphenoidal sinus, or the sphenoid bone, was the base of the cranium, or bottom of the skull.

By Mr. *Broderick*.—A slight puncture in the heart might have produced syncope, loss of blood, or fainting from the shock given to the system. I perceived no appearance of blood upon the heart.

By Mr. *Kelly*.—From the situation of the bones, and the injury inflicted upon them, I think it not possible for any surgeon to say in what direction the bullet went,—he might, if the bones had been broken away.

*Lord Chief Baron*.—Did this gentleman observe the bones of the nose, and how they got into the throat ?

*Witness*.—No, my Lord, I did not pay any attention to them.

[Mr. *John Lawton* recalled for re-examination, and to produce the skull of the deceased \*.]

\* The witness walked across the table to the jury with the skull, and with the sword in one hand explained to them the nature of the wound on the sphenoidal sinus, and stated his reasons why he supposed it to have been inflicted by a sword. He said it appeared to him that the sword had entered by the sphenoidal sinus, traversed the mouth, hit the back part of the nose, and made its exit at the right eye. The witness then applied the sword to the supposed course of the instrument, which exactly agreed with the conjectural progress of the sword, causing the wound. He then applied the sword to the other eye, when it



Mr. *John Lawton*, examined by Mr. *Andrews*.—When I was examined before, I spoke of two teeth being out ; another has since dropped out or been drawn. One appears to have decayed away, another has either fallen out or been drawn, but much more recently. The tooth which I imagine to have decayed away was in the right of the upper jaw. On the left of the upper jaw there is one missing. There had been one, in the under jaw, which must have been out some time, as the socket was closed. When I speak of “drawn out,” I mean drawn out when the body was living.

By Mr. *Broderick*.—The tooth to which I allude might either have dropped out by reason of decomposition, or it might have been drawn during life.

*Peter Matthews* recalled. (The witness was examined by Mr. *Kelly* in the Grand Jury box, where he had been seated during the day.)

*Witness*.—I have already said that I knew Maria Marten very well ; she had a small enlargement on the front of her neck, which had the appearance of a wen.

*Ann Marten* (step-mother to deceased), examined by Mr. *Andrews*.

[Mr. J. Baalham produced the box which contained the relics of the dress, &c. of the deceased.]

was found to be impossible to trace any opening from thence into the sphenoidal sinus.

During this minute investigation, the learned counsel for the crown and for the defendant stood on either side of the witness while making his experiment, and delivered what might be termed a short lecture. Corder put on his spectacles and looked anxiously toward the jury box, to which spot, and to the prisoner, alternately, every eye was directed, to discover what emotions the latter might betray at this exhibition of the mournful remains of his victim.

*Witness.*—This is Maria's comb. I saw her with it last on the 18th of May twelvemonth, the day she went away with William Corder. These are her earrings, which she had in her ears on the same day.

*Lord Chief Baron.*—Let me see the earrings. Upon looking at them, his Lordship inquired whether there was a pair or one only?—Ans. A pair.

By *Mr. Andrews.*—This is the handkerchief (red and yellow, a silk one) Maria had round her neck the same day. This, also, (the green one) was one she had on the same day; it was next her throat, and the silk one over it. This is a piece of a Leghorn hat. She had a Leghorn hat on when she went away, trimmed with black riband, like this, and the edges correspond exactly. These are the shoes she had on. This is the ashen busk that was in her stays, and this is part of a pair of stays; both of which I know. This is the sleeve and bosom of a chemise which is of the same make as that in which she went out on the 18th of May, 1827, with the prisoner at the bar, to go to the Red Barn\*.

The witness having somewhat composed herself, Lea, the officer, was called in to produce the black reticule which he brought from Ealing, when he ap-

\* At this stage of the examination, either from her feelings, from the effluvia arising from the rags which had been taken from her butchered daughter-in-law, or the heat of the court, it was with difficulty that the witness could be preserved from fainting, by the restoratives which were given at the close of the examination.

During this time the crystal drops overran poor Thomas Marten's eyes, and rolled down the furrows of his sun-burnt face; and well they might,—this was the last time he was ever to see the fragile remains of poor Maria's wardrobe; no wonder had he exclaimed, "My tears become me, and my sorrow is just!"



prehended the prisoner. Mrs. *Marten* said, "This is Maria's bag, I know it very well."

*Lord Chief Baron*.—I do not think that this bag is sufficiently traced to have come from any place which belonged to the prisoner, nor was it found in his custody.

*Mr. Andrews*.—I consider it an important link in the chain of evidence. It has been sworn to have belonged to Maria Marten, and it was found, as well as the sword, in the house where the prisoner was apprehended, together with two writing-desks, which were opened by a key given by him to Lea the officer.

*Lord Chief Baron*.—I think you had better not press it. Do I understand you to say, however, that this was found in the room with the desk which the officer opened with the key given by the prisoner, and in the house where the sword was found?

*Mr. Andrews*.—Yes, my Lord, I so stated.

*Lord Chief Baron*.—It is coming very near evidence, certainly; but at the same time, I repeat, that you had better not press it, *if you do not want it!*

*Ann Marten* the younger, examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I know the green handkerchief to be that in which my sister went away, as well as this red and yellow silk one. She went away in these shoes on the 18th of May last year with Corder. I am sure this is part of her Leghorn bonnet. I know the ribbon from its peculiar edge. When my sister left the cottage of my father, she had a man's hat on, but this bonnet was put into the bag. I am certain

that this is a part of it, by the trimming as well as the riband. When she went away, she had a large tortoiseshell comb in her hair, such a one as this (produced), and some small combs. She had also earrings in her ears ; these are the same: I know they belonged to my poor sister, (the witness appeared deeply affected.) I do not know what kind of pocket-handkerchief she had when she went out, nor do I know what sort of sleeve was on her shift, or what kind of garters fastened her stockings.

Mr. *Andrews* here stated, that when *Lea* opened the desk with the key given by the prisoner, he found several letters written to *Corder*, and a passport for him (*Corder*) to go to France\*.

*Lord Chief Baron*.—I think it safer not to receive evidence of this, especially as, in a case of this grave nature, all doubtful points ought, from the importance of this trial to the prisoner, to be decided in his favour.

*Corder* appeared sensible of this benign interference of the court, and thrice bowed respectfully to his Lordship.

*Ann Marten* the elder was recalled to prove that, on the day *Maria* went away, she had white tape garters, similar in width to those found on her legs, and now produced.

*John Baalham*.—The parish of *Polstead* is within the Liberty of *Bury St. Edmund's*.

\* It is alleged, and partly believed, that this passport was taken out at *Mrs. Corder's* request; but of course it had his sanction, or why were his name and description given in it?—besides, it was found in his desk with his private papers



*Peter Matthews, Esq.*—Maria Marten was able to write letters. She wrote to me frequently, and could write very well.

*Thomas Marten* examined by *Mr. Kelly*.—I was present when the body was disinterred from the bay of the barn. The soil is loose loam, stones and gravel, and very dry.

This was the case for the prosecution, after occupying the Court upwards of fourteen hours.

*Lord Chief Baron.*—WILLIAM CORDER,—It now becomes my duty to call upon you for your defence, and to answer the charge upon which you are indicted. You will speak distinctly, and the Court and Jury will then be able to hear what you have to say.

---

#### PRISONER'S DEFENCE.

The Prisoner hereupon drew forth a quarto blue-covered copy-book, containing near a quire of post paper, from his side pocket; and after adjusting his spectacles, he bowed respectfully, but rather unsteadily, toward the Judge and Jury, and then proceeded, in a tremulous voice, to read his Defence, of which the following is a *verbatim* copy :—

“ My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury,—I am informed that Counsel upon a trial, even where the life of a human being is involved, are not permitted, by the existing law of the country, to address the Jury on behalf of a prisoner, though on the part of the prosecution a contrary practice prevails. This circumstance will explain to you, Gentlemen of the

Jury, the reason of my personally addressing you when called upon for my defence\*.

“I have, in consequence of this state of the law, endeavoured to collect a few observations upon the evidence, which I understood would be offered in support of the accusation brought against me, and on which you are this day summoned to decide. Should those observations be obscure, or improperly arranged and not apply, in some respects, to the evidence you have just heard, I trust you will humanely attribute such imperfections to the anxiety of mind under which I have laboured while engaged in collecting them, as well as to the difficulty which every man must experience in preparing a defence, who is kept, as I have been, in entire ignorance of the evidence intended to be preferred against my life†.

\* This defence was not the one which had been previously prepared for the prisoner, that having been metamorphosed,—or more properly, with a few exceptions, where general topics were only alluded to,—changed altogether; this might have partly arisen from a different mode of defence having been substituted.

In the first instance, it contained, after the manner of Thurtell's, a reference to cases in which innocent individuals had been condemned upon circumstantial evidence. Notwithstanding his legal advisers admitted that circumstantial evidence was always equivocal, and, by relying upon it, melancholy and dreadful instances of shedding innocent blood had occurred, they judiciously repressed that part of the address, perhaps to prevent the learned Judge from saying it was “a farrago of sophistry ingeniously compiled,”—a term which Mr. Justice Park applied to Thurtell's defence delivered before him at Hertford.

† This allegation, as to his “entire ignorance of the evidence intended to be preferred against his life,” was altogether a falsehood, because he heard part of it read at Polstead, at the adjourned Inquest, and, on his way to Bury Gaol, commented on some parts of it, and denied altogether the truth of some statements made by the witnesses. Beside this, his then solicitor, Mr. Humphreys, had a complete copy of the evidence, as was admitted on the trial; upon understanding which, the learned Lord Chief Baron said that the prisoner had no reason to complain, because



“ While I deplore, as much as any human being can do, the fatal event which has caused the present inquiry, let me in the outset entreat you to dismiss from your minds, as far as it is possible for men so to do, the horrid and disgusting details which have been circulated by means of the public press, from the time of my apprehension almost to the present hour. By that powerful engine, the press, which regulates the opinion of so many persons in this country, and which is too often, I fear, though unintentionally, the slanderer and destroyer of innocence, I have had the misfortune to be depicted in the most humiliating and revolting characters ! I have been described by that press as the most depraved of human monsters ; that, while I was professing to become the husband of the unfortunate Maria, I was meditating her murder\* !

he had been allowed such information, as to the charge alleged against him, as the law authorised.

It certainly did not appear, however, that the prisoner was supplied with a copy of the evidence subsequently taken ; but such verbal communications had passed as enabled his solicitor to anticipate the accusations which would be preferred on the part of the crown.

\* This passage, as well as the following, is, if not a plagiarism from, a close imitation of, Thurtell's philippic on the public press. The press is certainly a “ powerful engine,” and when properly put in motion, a public blessing ; and we consider truly such when it becomes the “ slanderer and destroyer of” *such* “ innocence” as Corder's, and depicts, in true colours, the enormity of *such deeds* as justly rendered him the “ most depraved of human monsters.”

This bulwark of British liberty will never be broken down by the anathemas of a perfidious and sanguinary murderer.

We have it from the best authority that it was a matter of regret to Corder during his confinement, that the vehicle of intelligence, of which he so much complains, had not reached him at Grove House, Ealing, before the intruding foot of Lea the officer entered it ; “ for then,” said he, “ I should have gone off to France immediately, as I had a passport in the house.” In the course of this narrative, we shall give an account of the ingenious means resorted to by Lea to discover the man—“ monster,” we

“ Standing before you thus stigmatised, and, I may say, prejudged (passing over as I do a multitude of other imputed crimes), it is not surprising, but almost natural, that you should enter upon the present investigation with feelings of detestation at conduct which it has thus studiously been endeavoured to fix on me:—but, as you value the sacred institutions of your country; as you revere the solemn oath you have each this day taken to administer justice between the Crown and the unfortunate individual who addresses you; as you expect peace and serenity of mind at your own homes after you shall have discharged your duty to your God and your country on this awful occasion, I implore you to banish from your recollection all those frightful misrepresentations; and let your verdict be founded only on the evidence you shall have this day heard within these walls\*.

“ Gentlemen, I would not willingly cast imputations on any man; yet situated as I am, I cannot, when

should have said, to use his own words, who, “ while professing to become the husband of the unfortunate Maria, was meditating her murder.”

\* Such a declamation as this, flowing from the lips of injured innocence, would have commanded respect; but to hear one of the vilest assassins, whose guilt will ever occupy a space in the annals of crime, and who must for ever stand recorded as a villain without a parallel; to hear such a one exhort twelve intelligent British jurymen to “ revere their oaths and value the sacred institutions of their country, to whom they owed a duty as well as to God ”—is intolerable. “ Peace and serenity of mind ” had long been strangers to *his* home, or why those torturing groans, and those restless nights, which, for weeks before he was apprehended, not only disturbed the repose of his deluded wife, but of a whole family! Why was it? Because Scripture and conscience both combined to tell him, that “ the hidden things of darkness ” should be revealed, and that the “ wicked should not go unpunished ;” because the shade of Maria was about his bed and his path, and in those hours of darkness he was left to desperation, “ and to the thorns that in his bosom lodged, to prick and sting him.”



defending my life, refrain from calling your attention to the conduct of my accusers, both at the inquest and since, as explanatory of some of the difficulties in which I am placed on the present occasion. Mr. Wayman, the Coroner of this district, you must be apprised, is also the attorney employed to conduct this prosecution. Now, no man ought to act in the first instance as the judge, and afterwards as the professional accuser. The expectation that he is to act in the latter capacity, may influence his conduct in the former. His Lordship, and you, gentlemen, will perceive that it probably did so in the present instance,—for at the inquest he refused to suffer me to be present whilst the witnesses were examined by him; and although my legal adviser cited many authorities in support of the right claimed on my part, yet I was excluded, and only admitted to hear the depositions read. Such conduct, on the part of the Coroner, appears to be most unjust towards a man whose existence was at stake, because, without imputing any thing unfair to the witnesses, it is well known that the presence of the party whose conduct is under inquiry operates on the minds of the witnesses, and makes them more likely to adhere to a correct representation of what they really know.

“ Again, gentlemen, since my committal to prison, a kind of second inquest has been held. The Coroner, either in his character of coroner, or as attorney for the prosecution, I know not which, has been to Polstead, and summoned several witnesses before him, as well those who had been examined at the Inquest as others, and after re-swearing and swearing them, proceeded to reduce their further examination to writing. At this time I was within a gaol, where I could have no knowledge of what was going on; but my solicitor waited on him at Bury, to remonstrate and protest against such proceedings, and to ask for copies of the depositions of the witnesses thus obtained. The Coroner re-

fused to furnish them, thereby excluding me from all knowledge of the evidence which I am this day summoned to contradict or disprove at the hazard of my life. I am told that, according to the strict law, he was justified in the refusal ; but I submit, that he ought to have had any additional evidence on oath taken before a Magistrate, when I should have been present, and have heard the witnesses examined.

“ The consequence of this unjust course of proceeding on the part of the coroner and attorney for the prosecution is, that I have never, until this day, heard any one of the witnesses against me examined ; and I will ask if it be possible for any man to have come prepared to contradict, by evidence, the falsehood of statements he has never heard, or to explain equivocal facts of which he has not been before apprized ? Are witnesses to be privately and secretly examined on oath, and pinned down to a certain statement of circumstances behind the back of a prisoner ? I am convinced, gentlemen, this can neither be just nor legal ; and I feel assured, that in the discharge of your solemn duties, you will watch with the greatest jealousy, evidence procured in a manner so clandestine and improper.

“ The charge against me, awful and embarrassing as it is in its nature, would have induced most men, in fairness and justice to the accused, to have pursued a very different course of conduct to that I have endeavoured to describe\*.

“ It has been well observed, ‘ That truth is sometimes stranger than fiction,’ and never was the observation more strongly exemplified than in my life,

\* In another part of our work will be found a complete refutation of this trumpety charge against Mr. Wayman ; but the malevolent shaft thus levelled at him was broken asunder by the observation of the judge. The panoply in which the character of this gentleman is clothed, both as it regards his professional purity and his kindness and humanity, is too complete to be stripped off by the base accusations and insinuations of a self-convicted murderer.



and the circumstances connected with the extraordinary occurrences which have led to the present charge. The last few years of my existence have been one continued series of misfortunes. Within the short period of six months I was deprived by death of all my brothers—three in number—and my father also died only a few months before\*.

“To proceed, however, to the more immediate object of my defence. I have heard the indictment read, and the evidence offered to sustain it, and I am ready to admit that the facts are such as would naturally excite in the mind of every man the strongest suspicions of my guilt; but those facts are capable of explanation, and, conscious as I am of my entire innocence, I commit myself with confidence to your judgment, imploring your attention to that explanation, and to the detail of the real circumstances connected with the death of the unfortunate Maria †.

\* The prisoner here quotes a passage from Lord Byron, *i. e.*, “Truth is sometimes stranger than fiction,” and then applies it to the circumstances and occurrences connected with the present charge. Little perhaps did the culprit think, when he penned and read this observation, that another person, and that person a magistrate before whom he had been examined in London, viz., M. Wyatt, Esq., used similar language in regard to the charge preferred against him, and which, from its applicability, we have selected to form a part of the title-page to this history, but we again repeat it: “*I never knew or heard of a case in my life which abounded with so many extraordinary incidents as the present. It really appears more like a romance than a tale of real life; and were it not that the circumstances were SO WELL AUTHENTICATED, it would appear absolutely incredible: it however verifies the remark of Lord Byron, that TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.*” The prisoner then descants upon the loss of his brothers; but he forgot to say that his brother Thomas died a premature death only two months and nineteen days before the fatal 18th of May; and that James, at the time he committed the foul murder, lay upon his death-bed, and died within about a month after the tragical event. How desperately wicked must have been the heart of this young man!!

† The prisoner here pretends to be fully cognisant of the al-

“I am well aware of my imprudence in having so long concealed the disclosures I am about to make, and that I have endangered my life by the concealment; but I was stupified and overwhelmed by the strange and disastrous occurrences from which guilt might so easily be inferred against the most innocent; and driven to an immediate decision as to the course I must pursue, I acted with fear, instead of with the confidence of innocence; and having succeeded, in the first instance, by a false excuse, in concealing the death of Maria, I did that which most innocent men, circumstanced as I was, would have done, persevered in the falsehood, and have thus unhappily supplied evidence, which, unexplained, leads to the strong suspicion against me. I am also aware that, by my present statement, I may supply defects in the evidence as to the time and place of Maria’s death, but at this awful moment I am resolved to disclose the truth, regardless of the consequences\*.

legations set out against him in the indictment, and admits that there are circumstances connected with the case, of a fearful and equivocal description, which would be very likely to excite suspicions against him; yet how unblushingly does he boast of his consciousness of “entire innocence,” and vauntingly commit his cause with confidence to the court and jury; and then, in allusion to his victim, hypocritically designates her “the unfortunate Maria!”

\* The case of Corder has been compared to that of Eugene Aram. We do not, however, discover any very striking resemblance between them, either as to the individuals or the circumstances attending them. (Vide Kelly’s edition of the Newgate Calendar, vol. ii., p. 37C.) Eugene Aram was a distinguished scholar, but Corder had no pretensions to literary knowledge. If the latter excelled in any one thing in preference to another, it was in epistolary correspondence; and even in that he was miserably defective, for his style and diction plainly discovered that he was ignorant of the first rudiments of grammar. In the case of Aram, the murder for which he suffered had been concealed for many years; but here one short year had not run its round ere justice had overtaken the guilty culprit. If there could have been



“ You have heard of the intimacy that subsisted between me and Maria, and of her pregnancy. In order to conceal from my mother and sister her situation, I provided lodgings for her at Sudbury, where every attention was paid to her comfort, and she was delivered of a male child. After the usual time, it was arranged that she should return to her father's with the infant, which she did, where she continued within doors, it not being known in the neighbourhood that she had come back\*.

“ About a fortnight after her return, the child died in the arms of Mrs. Marten, naturally, and not by violent means, as has been falsely given out by the newspapers. On the happening of this event, it became necessary to bury the child ; and, as the birth of the infant had been concealed from my mother and family, and from the parish officers, it was agreed by Mrs. Marten, Maria, and myself, that the child should be buried in the fields, though to Thomas Marten, Maria's father, it was represented that we were about to take it to Sudbury, where it was born, for interment. Accordingly, at night, Maria and I left her father's cottage with the

a doubt in the case of Aram, there is none in this ; the story which Corder hereafter tells in his defence, of the manner in which his victim died, and which we have transcribed verbatim from his own manuscript, is too extravagant to impose on any one : it was, we say, in itself a conviction.

\* It is conceded to the prisoner, that during the residence of Maria at Sudbury, every attention was paid to her comfort, because two respectable and disinterested witnesses have deposed to that fact. Nor is it denied that he acted towards her with personal civility and apparent kindness ; nay, we believe that it is admitted on all hands that he professed to love the ill-fated girl with ardent affection. Yet these could be only mere outward professions, and used only to cloke or hide the deformity of his mind, and conceal his premeditated and murderous intentions. The concealment of Maria at her father's house was also a continuation of the plan he had adopted, in order to await a favourable opportunity to pounce upon his victim.

child, and after burying it, I took her to my own home, where, there being a separate staircase, I was enabled to conduct her to my own bed-room, in which she was concealed the following day and night\*.

\* That considerable suspicion existed as to the fate of this child, and that many surmises were raised, is readily admitted; and even now it remains an opinion indelibly fixed upon the minds of many, that the infant fell a victim to some narcotic, administered by its unnatural father; and the conclusion does not appear to be overstrained, when we look at the development of Corder's character. If the villain could deliberately butcher the unoffending mother, his covetousness, not to use a harsher term, might have induced him to make away with the babe, in order to save the expense of its maintenance. That Maria at least suspected that there had been some foul play there can be but little doubt, yea, if the fact was as is surmised, she might even be an accessory *after it*; but from her generally reputed affection for her children we can never believe that she had any previous knowledge of it. It is also impossible not to suppose but that she knew of the place where the little innocent was interred; but when we reflect upon the threats which Corder sometimes held out to her, it is no wonder that she made her bosom the repository of the secret: nevertheless, at times, mysterious words flowed from her lips, such as, "*If I go to prison, you shall go too!*" Corder said in the last paragraph, that he would "*disclose the truth, regardless of the consequences.*" It is worthy of remark that his confession was confined to the death of the murdered woman alone, and to the last he refused to disclose any previous circumstances of his flagitious life. When, however, he was pressed upon the subject of the child, he said, "Pray, Mr. ———, don't distress me; I have quite enough to bear!"

In this part of his address, he endeavours to insinuate that Mrs. Marten, the mother-in-law, was in the secret as to the clandestine interment of the child, but we do not believe it. She was rigidly cross-examined upon that head by Mr. Broderick, and she solemnly declared that she knew nothing respecting it but what she learnt from Corder and Maria, who gave her to understand that the child was buried at Sudbury. Some of the public journals have been rather severe in regard to the part this woman took on the day of the awful tragedy, when she assisted her hapless daughter while attiring herself in the apparel of the other sex. We see no cause for these animadversions, because, if she had been directly or indirectly *particeps criminis*, she would never have urged her husband daily to go to the Red Barn and



“ There was a pair of small pistols kept loaded by me in the bed-room. Maria knew that these pistols had been repaired whilst we were at Sudbury, which she had taken away herself from Mr. Harcourt’s ; and, as it afterwards turned out, she availed herself of the opportunity to take them from my bed-room, without my knowledge, and concealed them. I had often shown her the pistols, and explained the manner of using them\*.

“ At the expiration of the two nights, Maria returned to her father’s, he thinking, of course, that she had been to Sudbury for the purpose before stated. Long before, and down to this period, Maria had been very much depressed in spirits, as has been proved by several of the witnesses, and she had often strongly pressed me to marry her ; and, though I was very much attached to her, still, as I had some reason to suspect that she kept up a correspondence with a gentleman in London, by

make search for the absent Maria. It is due to this woman to state, that during our long attendance in courts of judicature we never saw a witness who delivered testimony with more modest boldness—there was no fencing with questions, nor was she a *Non mi ricordo* witness, who would not remember them—she manifested no mental reservation ; and when subjected, as she was, to a long and most severe cross-examination, she betrayed no fear, and scarcely deviated an *iota* from her previous statement. The judge believed her as a witness of truth, and she was a “ swift witness ” indeed against the prisoner.

\* There is no doubt that Maria was aware that Corder had pistols, and that she went to Mr. Harcourt’s respecting them ; but that gentleman’s evidence is quite at variance with the prisoner’s statement. But suppose she did fetch them away herself, or purloined them from his bed-room, as he says, she might have done so from other motives than the one he suggests ; it might have been that she took them to prevent him from shooting himself, because, among other threats and intimidations, he once was heard to say, when words arose about the money he had stolen from her, that, “ if she repeated the circumstance again, he would shoot himself.” Well had it been for the young woman and her ill-fated family, as well as for the families of others, had he carried this threat into execution !

whom she had had a child, and as I knew my family very much disapproved of the connexion, I declined to comply with her wishes. This produced many words between us\*.

“ Maria subsequently renewed her solicitations that I should make her my wife, and enforced her arguments on this subject by alluding to the child beforementioned, of which she always represented me to be the father. Gentlemen, though Maria’s character was not, as you have before heard, free from blemish, still as my connexion with her had produced a strong attachment on my part, I at length yielded to her solicitations, and agreed to marry her. In order that my mother should not know of the intended marriage, it was arranged that Maria should go to Ipswich, where either the banns could be asked, or a license obtained, after a short residence by her. A day was accordingly fixed. Whether I ever stated that a warrant was out against Maria for having bastard children, I do not recollect ; but if I did so, it must have been because there was a general report of that nature in the parish, and I was anxious that neither her return to Polstead nor her situation might be known to my mother or the neighbours ; and it was for the same reason, I believe, that Maria dressed in male attire on the day in question, which she was to have exchanged at the place that has been so often mentioned in these proceedings†.

\* That Maria should strongly press her lover to fulfil his promises is no wonder ; she had a right to enforce her claim ; these promises had not been made to her and her family only ; for, in this instance, Corder overstepped the bounds of that extraordinary caution which was his peculiar characteristic, and declared to several of the villagers, that he intended to make Maria his wife. (Vide the evidence of Rachel Burke, page 147).

The reasons which he assigns for having delayed the nuptials were as false as they were frivolous.

† In this part of his address, the prisoner, while he attempts



“ It has been proved by Mrs. Marten and her family, that Maria had been in low spirits some time past, and was crying bitterly when leaving her father’s cottage on the day in question\*.

“ Gentlemen—This was the origin of the fatal occurrence :—As we proceeded across the fields to the barn (which I beg you to bear in mind was a place where we were in the constant habit of meeting and passing hours together, and even nights together), I gently reprovèd her for giving way to tears, and observed to her, that that was not the way she should conduct herself towards one who was willing to make every sacrifice to render her happy. By this time we had reached the barn, when, in consequence of this and other observations which passed, and whilst she was changing her dress, she flew into a passion ; told me that she did not care anything about me ; that I was too proud to take her to my mother’s, and when married she did not think she should be happy, as my mother and family, she was sure, would never notice her. She

to throw a doubt on some part of the evidence—on the other hand, confirms the testimony of the three Martens.

Whatever were the blemishes of Maria’s character, they were known to him before he formed a connexion with her, and plighted his vows : no person can ever view her as a pattern of morality and discretion, neither was she a profligate and abandoned prostitute. Those who knew her well are the best judges, and their uniform opinion is that she had been “ more sinned against than sinning.” Her irregular life and premature death, however, ought to teach a useful lesson to young and inexperienced maidens, and caution them not to listen to the voice of the flatterer.

“ Learn to be wise from others’ ills.”

\* “ Low spirits ” she might well be in—knowing she had to do with a ——, who was devoid of mercy, and divested of honour. Had she known of the fatal plot, which he must at this time have formed against her life (for it must have been long formed), she would, indeed, have had cause to weep ! The real cause of her shedding tears, however, was, as has already been stated, because, when she wished to kiss her beautiful little boy, the child refused on account of her being disguised.

upbraided me with not having so much regard for her as the gentleman before alluded to had shown. Much further conversation arose, the particulars of which it is useless to detail, but I felt myself so insulted, and became so much irritated by her observations, that I told her if she would go on in this way before we were married, what could I expect afterwards; that I had then seen sufficient to convince me we should never live happily together, and I was, therefore, resolved, before it was too late, not to marry her, informing her that I should return home, and that she might act as she thought proper respecting her future conduct\*.

“ In consequence of this determination I turned from her, and had scarcely proceeded to the outer gate of the barn-yard, when I heard a loud report, like that of a gun or pistol. Alarmed at this noise, I immediately ran back, and to my horror I found the unhappy girl on the ground apparently dead. Astonished at the suddenness of the occurrence, and overwhelmed by my own feelings at the awful event, I stood for some moments in a state of complete stupefaction†.

\* This story is sophistical and unnatural; for it is very unlikely that, while the young woman was making actual preparations for the consummation of her wishes, that she should commence a wrangle.

† Now we approach the close of the drama, and discover the double villainy of the murderer. If there be, next to the actual murder, one thing more diabolical than another in the character of Corder, it is this very accusation; but the fabricated assertion that poor Maria had committed suicide, although meant to operate in exculpation, confirmed his guilt in a moment in the mind of every one in the court—if at any time doubt and uncertainty had hovered about this “foul deed of bloody mystery,” they were now dispersed.

Had, indeed, the case been as stated by him, and credence given to his tale, he would have lived an object of detestation and suspicion, because the world would have thought that the young woman was goaded to the desperate act by the continual inflictions



“ When I had in some measure recovered from this stupor, my first thought was to run for assistance, and well had it been for me had I acted on that impulse; but the dreadful situation of Maria deterred me from quitting the spot. I endeavoured to raise her from the ground in the hope of affording her relief, but to my horror I found she was altogether lifeless. I then placed the body on the ground, in doing which, I perceived the fatal weapon, which I took up, when, to add to my terror, and the extraordinary singularity of my situation, I discovered it to be one of my own pistols, which I had always kept loaded in my bed-room \*.

“ The danger of my situation now flashed upon my mind. There lay the unfortunate girl wounded to death, and by an instrument belonging to me, and I the only human being present who could prove how the circumstance occurred. I will not attempt to describe to you (because it would be impossible) the agitation of my mind at finding myself surrounded by such suspicious and unfortunate circumstances. My faculties for the time seemed suspended. I knew not what to do, and some time

tion of private wrongs. The subsequent confession of the prisoner, however, has set conjecture at rest. We only wonder how a man, possessed as he was at least of a theoretical knowledge of religion, could utter such abominable falsehoods, not only in a solemn court of justice, but in the presence of Almighty God, before whose awful tribunal his conscience must have told him he was so soon to appear !

\* With regard to the pistols being, as he stated, always kept loaded in the bed-room, the direct contrary was proved in evidence. We not only trace them to Hadleigh, where they were taken to be repaired, in order that they might subsequently do their murderous work effectually, but we find the prisoner in Old Marten's chimney corner, snapping the locks and using them as a kind of plaything to amuse the lookers on.

We know, too, from good authority, that he was in the frequent habit (but why he did so we have not ascertained) of carrying these weapons about his person in his ordinary walks.

elapsed before I sufficiently recovered myself to become thoroughly sensible of the awful and responsible situation in which I stood \*.

“ When once I had paused, my course was fixed ; for having delayed to give an alarm the instant the mischief had happened, it seemed to me that it would only have added to the suspicion that would have been directed against me, had I an hour or two afterwards reported what had befallen the unfortunate Maria.—Concealment, therefore, I confess, appeared to my then distracted and agitated mind, the only possible mode of escaping from the consequences of that day’s occurrence.

\* It was the opinion of many for a considerable time, and some persons now indulge it, that Corder had an accomplice in the bloody transaction. This supposition was much strengthened by a convict in Chelmsford gaol having thrown out ambiguous expressions as to the *final end* of Corder. The words uttered by this man, whose name was Smith, alias Cooper, but commonly known by the appellation of “ Beauty Smith,” (see p. 81.) were, however, prophetic, viz., “ That Bill Corder will be hanged some time.” In consequence of the suspicion which attached to Smith, an application was made to government, the result of which was the following letter from Captain Stedman :

“ His Majesty’s Ship, Leviathan,  
“ May 5, 1828.

“ Gentlemen,

“ In answer to your letter of 2d instant, I have strictly questioned Samuel Smith, alias Cooper, who states that what he meant by saying he could give some information, was respecting two stolen horses, which are now sent out of the country, and when Mr. Neill comes to Portsmouth he will state the particulars to him.

“ With respect to William Corder, he states, he was well acquainted with him, and that he was once concerned with him in stealing a pig from a person living at Hyam ; he also states that he never heard him mention the name of Maria Marten in his life, and that he heard that she was gone to live with him in London, and he positively asserts that he never heard any thing relative to the murder, till one day last week.

“ Your obedient, &c.,

(Signed)

“ CHAS. STEDMAN.”

“ The Churchwardens of Polstead.”



“The evidence you have heard is, therefore, easily explained. Having once resolved to conceal what had occurred, I buried Maria as well as I was able, and afterwards accounted for her absence in some such manner as the witnesses have described to you; sometimes saying one thing,—sometimes another. It may be asked, if I were innocent, why should I do all this? I answer that observation by stating, that a man may, through fear, pursue the same conduct that another man may from guilt; and, situated as I was, I ask whether it might not have occurred to you or any other man to act as I did. It may be said, why don't I prove this statement as to Maria's death, by witnesses? How can I? Are there not many circumstances in this life which happen between two individuals, which can only be proved by the individuals themselves? and as Maria is now no more, how can I, by any possibility, prove it other than by a representation of the real circumstances, in the manner I have done? Neither can I offer any direct proof of the manner in which Maria possessed herself of my pistols, which I always kept loaded in my bed-room. I mention pistols, as I afterwards found the other one in her reticule. She obtained them, there can be no doubt, during the time she was in my bed-room, while it was believed by Thomas Marten, her father, that she was gone to Sudbury, as before related; and as I had no occasion to use the pistols, they were not missed by me\*.

\* The prisoner here confirms the testimony of several of the witnesses for the prosecution. He admits, also, that he buried the remains of Maria; but the manner how he performed this task he did not here condescend to tell us. It will nevertheless turn out, in the sequel, that our opinion was correct when, in a former part of our history, we stated, that another tool than a mattock must have been employed to dig the rude sepulchre for the hapless victim.

“A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,  
For ——— and a shrouding sheet,  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.”

“ It has, I believe, been represented by some of the witnesses, that the body had the appearance of having been stabbed and contused. All I can say in answer to this is, that no stab or wound was ever inflicted by me ; and I believe the surgeons would never have thought of stabs or wounds, had it not been that a small sword was found in my possession, which gave a probability to their testimony\*.

One would almost imagine that this sanguinary and deliberate murderer had a heart much harder than the rocky soil he was excavating, or how could he, in the view too of the dupe to his profane vows of eternal love—within a few yards of the slaughtered victim of his cupidity, whose reeking blood was ascending toward heaven, demanding vengeance ; how could he, we ask, unless his conscience was “ seared as with a hot iron,” have had strength to perform such a task under such circumstances ? Had it so happened that the culprit had made no confession, the vamped up story about the pistols would never have been believed.

There is one thing which has struck us as connected with this dreadful tragedy, and that is, the short-sightedness of Corder with regard to the interment. A speedy decomposition was doubtless his wish ; but the hellish fiend who prompted him to the bloody deed, never suggested to him the inflammatory and destructive quality of quick lime, the application of which to the mangled corse would have speedily destroyed every possible means of identity. The finger of God was here, and He was determined that the wicked violation of his laws should not go unpunished.

“ Murder, though it hath no tongue,  
Will speak with most miraculous organ.”

\* The prisoner, in this and the following paragraph, denies that he ever made use of a sharp instrument, or that he ever inflicted a stab or wound upon the deceased with such a weapon. The testimony of the three surgeons is conclusive upon this point ; and numbers of medical men, and persons eminent for their knowledge in the science of anatomy, who had compared the instrument with the punctures in the heart and ribs, were of the same opinion with them. That he had the sword ground in the manner it appeared when exhibited in court, was not denied, and he must have had some object in view when he ordered it to be so sharpened, but which he concealed under the pretext made to Offord the cutler, that he wanted to use it at the wedding of his



“ I would ask, is it likely, if wounds had been inflicted by a sharp instrument, that it would be probable, after the lapse of twelve months, for human judgment, however acute, to speak satisfactorily on the subject, the body being, as it is proved to you, in a very advanced state of decomposition? If, however, you are satisfied that there are stabs or wounds on the body as described, I can only account for their existence by supposing that they might have been unintentionally made by the mole-spud, or instruments used in searching for and digging up the body in the barn, as it has been proved by the witness Pryke; on drawing out the mole-spud, he observed, ‘ There is something human here ;’ which clearly shows that the instrument must have penetrated the body.

“ I have now detailed the circumstances of the melancholy event which has caused the present trial; and in confirmation of the truth of my statement, I entreat you to consider and weigh dispassionately and attentively the few remarks I have to offer. My accusers impute to me the deliberate murder of a female whom I had always treated with kindness, and had promised to marry. Gentlemen,

cousin, who was about to marry in a fortnight—whereas, in fact, no such ceremony was about to take place.

If, however, the prisoner really did use this weapon, (and that he did who can doubt, that heard or reads the evidence?) it is difficult to conjecture what motive he could have had for suppressing the fact, in his after-confession, unless he wished to leave an impression on the mind of the world that, although a murderer, he was not so deliberately sanguinary, cruel, and bloodthirsty as this circumstance, if believed, would assuredly mark him.

On the other hand, how could he reconcile this denial with an observation, which he frequently made to a fellow-prisoner, when, in allusion to this very instrument, he said, “ *That sword will hang me !*”

The prisoner, however, was well aware of the importance of denying, on the present occasion, the infliction of a stab by a sharp instrument, because an admission of an incised wound would have struck at the groundwork of his defence, viz. that Maria shot herself with a pistol, and died instantly.

can any sufficient motive be suggested for such a horrible crime ?

“ As to the intended marriage, it was quite easy for me to have broken off the connexion ; my friends disapproved of it ; this alone would have furnished a sufficient reason for so doing, independently of her irregularities with another individual : and can it be supposed, if such had been my desire, when I left her father’s cottage in her company, that I should have effected it by the unnecessary commission of a crime at which human nature shudders, when means perfectly innocent were within my reach ? But I will fearlessly ask you, or any man who calmly reasons on the facts, whether it is possible to believe I could have intended the destruction of this poor girl in the manner imputed by the prosecution ? It was known to her family that we were going to the barn \*. Does any man who me-

\* The prisoner here argues upon the improbabilities, as he terms them, connected with the circumstances or grounds of accusation, viz. as it regards time and place ; but these sophisms appeared to produce little, if any, effect upon the minds of the court and jury.

In allusion to the Red Barn, one of the ephemeral publications which arose out of this transaction, gravely informs us, that “ it seems to have taken its name from the tiles that cover part of it ;” and, “ because a chaff-house which is a lean-to against it, and a waggon-shed, at some *little distance* from it, are covered with tiles.” The truth is, that no part of the barn, of which we have given a faithful representation, is covered with tiles—its entire roof being of thatch. The barn derived its name from the fact of its outer boards having been painted *red* at the time it was erected ; but the sultry sun of summer and the stormy blast of winter have nearly destroyed and obliterated its outward adorning,—nevertheless, any person who visited the building might have discovered that many of the boards still bore evident marks of the painting-brush. This circumstance may appear trivial, but “ vulgar errors ” ought to be corrected. Little did the ill-starred Maria think when she prattled of this Red Barn in her childhood, or when in after life it became the scene of her amours, and witnessed the mutually plighted vows of herself and her lover, that his fell hand would be one day



dictates a crime make known the place at which it is to be committed? We went in the middle of the day to a place in the neighbourhood of cottages. Can it be believed that I should have selected that time and place to effect the object? It is true the time and place of her death were undiscovered on the day it happened, and for a long time afterwards; but this was accidental, and no one but a madman would have incurred the risk of an immediate discovery, when discovery was so probable. Had I intended to commit the crime, it is obvious I should have chosen a very different time, place, and opportunity.

“In further confirmation of the truth of my defence, look at what has been my conduct since this fatal occurrence. Did I, as would have been the case had I been a guilty man, run away? No. I remained on my mother’s premises for months and months afterwards, and it was not until my health became impaired in the September following, partly, perhaps, from this melancholy subject dwelling on my mind, and partly from the dreadful havoc which death had then recently made in my family, as before adverted to, that I was advised, by my medical attendant, to go to some watering place for the benefit of my health. I went to Portsmouth, from there to the Isle of Wight, which place I left in consequence of a letter from my sister, who wrote it, desiring me to meet her in London on family business. I accordingly met my sister in town, for the purpose before mentioned\*.

raised to deprive her of existence, and that the threshing-floor of the building should become *red*, and its interstices glutted with her blood!!

Had it never before been so designated, it might well now be called *The RED Barn*.

\* Frequent allusions have been made to Corder’s continuing on the spot; and it has excited no little surprise how a man so guilty could have remained so long at his residence after the me-

“It has been stated, I believe, that among my papers was found a passport to France for myself and wife, with whom I first became acquainted in November in the last year. This, like other circumstances, has been caught at to show that I meant to leave the country. I say it means the reverse, and so I could prove were I allowed to call my wife as a witness. It was at her request that this passport was obtained, in order for us to visit a friend of her’s in Paris. I declined going on account of the expense. Besides I had abundance of opportunity to have done so, as well before the date of this passport as since, down to the time of my apprehension, but I had no guilt on my conscience, and therefore had not any inducement to fly my country. Some articles of Maria’s property were found in my possession: is it possible to believe I should have preserved them had I been conscious of guilt? Should I not, on the contrary, have destroyed them without delay?

“While in town, in December last, I advertised the sale of the lease of my wife’s house in the *Times* paper, in which advertisement my name and address were inserted at full length. Does this look as

morale 18th of May, and, as it were, within sight of the very theatre of his barbarity, and the sepulchre of the sacrifice he had murderously immolated! But so it was; and, whatever were the inward workings of his mind, his outward demeanour was such as to hoodwink suspicion of his being a murderer. As soon as the harvest was gathered in, and the grave of Maria covered with the fruits of the earth, he collected a considerable sum of money, with which he left Polstead, never more to return to his native village, until forced thither by the powerful arm of the law, bound in manacles, followed by the execrations of the populace, who believed the justness of the accusation against him. While he was there laden with guilt, he confesses he “felt the most acute anguish,”—and well he might; for, in addition to the offence for which he was apprehended, he had brought misery and disgrace upon his widowed mother and his family—utter ruin upon an innocent and deserving wife, and eternal infamy upon himself.



though I was seeking to conceal myself? Again, had I intended to quit England, should I have suffered my wife to have taken the academy at Ealing, where I was arrested, and where I had lived three months before\*?

\* As many particulars relative to the caption of the prisoner, and to which he here alludes, have not been made public, we subjoin an account, which has been transmitted to us by that meritorious and intelligent officer, James Lea.

The account of the murder having been transmitted by the parish officers of Polstead to the Lambeth Police Office, Lea, the principal officer, was despatched with Ayers, the messenger, from Suffolk, and they first went to No. 6, Gray's Inn Terrace, where Corder had formerly lived; but there they were informed that he had left for some months, and was gone to reside at a boarding-school somewhere near Brentford. Lea forthwith went to the latter place without warrant or pistols, and, on his arrival, left Ayers at the Red Lion at Brentford, while he went to *reconnoitre* Ealing Lane, and the several boarding-schools situate in it. Ayers had given him a description of the prisoner's person, to whom he was well known, and it was for this reason the country constable was kept *incog*. Lea instantly set on foot an active inquiry of every person likely to know if a person named Corder lived in the neighbourhood, without gaining the least satisfactory intelligence, and he began to think that he would have to return without gaining his point. On his return to the inn, however, he met an old barrowman, who told him that, about four months' ago, he saw a load of goods at the door of the school kept by Miss Engleton, but whether it was a remove out or in he could not tell. Lea, recollecting that the girl at Gray's Inn Terrace had spoken of four months as about the period since the removal of Corder, began to think that he had a clue to find him.

On his return to the inn, he requested the landlord to become his confidant, which was agreed to: Lea then told him who he was, the nature of his business, and also the name and description of the person he wanted; but the landlord could give him no information, although he well knew the school reported to have been kept by Miss Engleton. Lea then inquired, whether he had any friend or neighbour whose children went to school there? The landlord replied, that the daughter of Mr. ———, who lived opposite, went there as a day-scholar. This gentleman was let into the secret as to Lea's errand, and promised not only profound secrecy, but to render him every possible assistance. Upon the little girl being ques-

“ I have now stated the ground of my defence. I do not deny that my accusers are justified, from

tioned as to whether she ever saw a short gentleman, wearing spectacles, at her governess's, she replied that she had, and that she generally saw him at about twelve o'clock in the day, and had heard her governess call him Mr. Corder.

This being late at night, Lea wished to pre-concert a plan how to get into the house on the following morning, for he knew almost to a certainty, that he was on the right scent; and after many schemes, it was at length agreed that Mr. ——— should go to the school with his daughter on the following morning, and as it was an extraordinary occurrence for him to do so, he made the excuse of presenting a little account due to him from a person who was on a visit at Grove House. About ten o'clock they reached the house, the street-door of which was open. Mr. ——— entered first with his daughter, and Corder immediately came out of the room into the hall, whereupon Mr. ——— said, “ Good morning, Mr. Corder,” to which the latter replied. Lea at this instant went up to the prisoner, and said, “ Your name is Corder, I believe,” and the fact was admitted. [The conversation which then took place is detailed by the witness on the Trial.—Vide page 162.]

The prisoner felt a little agitated at first, and requested to be alone with his wife for five minutes; this was, of course, refused. He then said, “ You will allow me to finish my breakfast?” Lea replied, “ Yes; and if any questions are asked, or suspicions raised as to my being here, you may say, I am come to arrest you for debt, and I shall not contradict you.” The prisoner expressed his thanks, and said it should be so. He then went to the table, and took some eggs off the fire, but did not partake of them, and kept up the conversation which was passing. The ladies, for several of the family were present, expressed their uneasiness at seeing Lea, and Mrs. Corder inquired his business. Corder said, “ Oh, he has a little business with me”; and then went into the drawing-room, and rang the bell for his servant to call his wife. She came, and Lea began to search his person, when the prisoner wished to hand his pocket-book, keys, &c. to his wife; the officer prevented his doing so, but promised that they should be restored. Mrs. Corder expressed her anxiety to know what all this bustle originated in; to this the prisoner did not reply, but requested that his coat and hat might be brought, as Lea had told him he must take him to the Red Lion. At this moment, Mr. Moore (Mrs. Corder's brother) came down stairs, and demanded the authority of the officer, and the nature of his business? Lea for some time evaded the question, not wishing to alarm the house further; but Mr. Moore being imperative, Lea said, “ I apprehend Mr.



the circumstances, unexplained as they have hitherto been, in submitting the case to your judgment. My

Corder on a charge of murder." "Murder!" exclaimed Mr. Moore in astonishment, "you must be mistaken in the person, for I am sure he could never commit a murder; he has not courage to kill a mouse. Whom has he murdered? Lea replied, he was charged with the murder of a young woman in Suffolk. Mr. Moore then said, "I should as soon have thought that that tree growing yonder would walk, as that he could have committed murder. He has married my sister lately; and during the opportunity I have had of seeing him, and from what she says, he is a most kind, tender-hearted, and indulgent husband." Lea then took the prisoner to the Red Lion, handcuffed him, and, leaving him with Ayers, returned to search the house, in the manner already described in the trial, and found the various articles produced on that occasion. In addition to those, he discovered that the trunks of the prisoner were well stored with valuable garments and expensive linen; and at the bottom of one of the trunks lay a volume of *Fanny Hill*, and another obscene book, in splendid morocco binding. He also found several letters, which had been addressed to the prisoner at various places in London, but their contents were unimportant. In one of the private drawers in the writing-desk, there were upwards of forty printed advertisements "for a wife," which had been cut out of the London newspapers—these he no doubt had to assist him in the drawing of that unfortunate document, through which he made an alliance with a respectable family, upon whom he has brought distress and misery.

One of the letters found by Lea was addressed to the prisoner by his sister, in which she says, "William, you know what a horrid liar you are, and you are now in London, a place where there are many temptations—pray avoid them, and leave off your evil ways, and endeavour to become a useful member of society." It ought to be observed, that Lea in making his search, performed his duty with all possible delicacy, in order that the boarders and other inmates might not be aware of the precise nature of his business. In the course of the morning Mrs. Corder having been informed of the dreadful nature of the charge against her husband, was considerably agitated, she having at first supposed that it was an arrest for debt, or, at the worst, upon a charge of bigamy. The first ebullition of grief having subsided, she seemed in better spirits, upon the ground of unbelief that a person who had been so kind to her could be capable of committing such a crime as that imputed to him. On one occasion, Mr. Moore, her brother, observed to Lea, that if Corder was guilty, justice ought to be satisfied; but, if he

fault has been the concealment of those circumstances which at the time they occurred I ought to have disclosed to the public, fearless of the consequences. And now I most anxiously hope I have not failed in convincing you that I am innocent of the crime laid to my charge; but if suspicion still remains in your minds, I am confident you will, under the direction of his Lordship, extend to me that humane principle of our law, which considers every man innocent until his guilt be clearly and satisfactorily established, and which always awards to the accused the benefit of every doubt. The fatal event I can solemnly affirm happened as I have described it, however circumstances or prejudice may give a different complexion to the transaction.

“ It now rests, Gentlemen, with your consciences either to award me an acquittal or an ignominious death. To the former, my own conscience tells me I am fairly and honestly entitled—to the latter

was innocent, he (Mr. Moore) would render him every assistance in his power.

Before they left Brentford for London, the officers, the prisoner, and Mr. Moore dined together, and Corder made a hearty meal, observing to Lea, “ You spoiled my breakfast this morning.” Mrs. Corder came over to the Red Lion to see her wretched husband before his departure; and when she entered she wept bitterly, and said, “ *The last time I was in this room was when my father kept the house.*” (It is another of the singular features of this history, that the very house where her husband was a captive, was that in which this distressed lady spent her days of innocent and childish gaiety.) After this repast, the party came off for London, where he was visited the next morning by his wife; after which, upon the order of M. Wyatt, Esq., he was conveyed by coach to Polstead. Whether from bravado or not, we cannot tell, the prisoner behaved very unseemly during the early part of his journey, and either joined in or laughed at obscene conversation.

The prisoner refers to the *Times* paper; we may just observe that Mr. Broderick, on the day of the trial, produced a copy of that journal, but the Lord Chief Baron would not receive it in evidence.



fearful alternative, I feel assured your justice and humanity will not consign me. Gentlemen, I have nothing more to say—my life is in your hands.”

During the time the prisoner was reading this address, which occupied thirty-two minutes, there was the most profound silence in court, and his Lordship and the jury listened with earnest attention. It was clear, from the pronunciation of particular words, that the prisoner was not a man of education. At times he trembled a good deal, but not more than any nervous man would do in a moment of excitement, or when he was addressing such an assemblage of persons.

We have reason to believe that the principal part of the defence was the prisoner's own composition, and the work of considerable time; at all events it was in his own hand-writing.

At times he appeared to stammer very considerably, but this was not owing, as has been imagined, either to imperfection of vision, or because the address was not plainly written. The fact is, he had embodied several remarks relative to the evidence of P. Matthews, Esq., and the five pound note, the mention of which it will be observed he carefully avoided—this was the cause of his hesitating two or three times in the course of delivering his address, towards the conclusion of which his voice faltered considerably.

---

#### WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENCE.

*William Goodwin*, examined by Mr. Broderick.—I live in Plough-lane, Sudbury. I remember the prisoner coming to my house to take apartments, in the spring of the year 1826. A young woman came there afterwards, whom I found to be Maria Marten, and who lay-in there. She remained with us

between two and three months. While she remained there, I cannot tell how often the prisoner came to visit her, but I should suppose two or three times a week, sometimes both before and after her confinement. When I saw them together I never saw anything to induce me to think they were not fond of one another. Either before or after her confinement she went to Mr. Harcourt's, the gunsmith, about some pistols. I think the prisoner went out with her. I did not see her go, but I heard her mention that she had been there. I remember their leaving my place together, in a chaise, on the 16th of April. They took the little child with them.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Andrews*.—Mr. Harcourt lives in North-street, Sudbury. I do not know Mr. Harcourt of Ipswich.

By the *Court*.—I only know that they went to Mr. Harcourt's about the pistols, because the young woman said so.

*Court*.—That is no evidence at all.

*Mary Ann Goodwin*, examined by Mr. *Prendergast*.—I live in Plough-lane, and am the wife of last witness. I knew Maria Marten. She came to lodge with me on the 19th of March, 1827. The prisoner used to visit her after he brought her there. Maria was confined there. She was with me upwards of two months. The prisoner never came less than once a week, and sometimes twice or thrice. She was frequently in bad spirits during her stay, but not always. I once heard her say that she went alone to Harcourt's after some pistols.

By the *Court*.—She said that Corder left orders



for her to go and fetch them against he came to see her, when he would take them away.

By Mr. *Prendergast*.—The prisoner always treated her with kindness, and they appeared to be much attached to each other.

*Thomas Hardy*, examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I live at Polstead. In February, 1827, I was in the employment of Mrs. Corder, the prisoner's mother. About that time I saw some pistols in the prisoner's possession. He was cleaning them. I remember seeing Maria Marten on the 13th of May last year, in company with the prisoner. They were walking together across the yard. I mean Maria and the prisoner. They afterwards went towards the stable, and then went away. There are two staircases to Mrs. Corder's house, and a person could go up by one of them to the room occupied by the prisoner, without his mother knowing anything about it.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Andrews*.—When I saw them together, it was about nine in the evening.

*Lucy Baalham*, examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—Last year, I lived in Mrs. Corder's service. I was with her eleven months, till last Old Michaelmas Day. In the spring of that year, I saw a pair of pistols in the prisoner's bed-room; sometimes they were in, and sometimes outside of the box. The prisoner remained with his mother until about a fortnight before I left. He always behaved like a kind, good-natured young man.

*Edward Living*, examined by Mr. *Prendergast*.—I am a surgeon, and live at Nayland. I have attended the prisoner professionally, and frequently paid him visits. About this time last year, I advised him to leave that part of the country (Pol-

stead), and go to a warm bathing-place. I particularly mentioned Hastings, or some other place on the south coast. At that time, he exhibited strong symptoms of consumption, and that was the reason why I recommended him to remove, thinking that the change might be beneficial to his health. I afterwards saw his mother, from whom I understood he was gone.

*Thersa Havers*, examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I know William Corder, the prisoner, and have known him from his infancy. During all that period, I always thought him a kind, good-tempered, and humane man. I do not live in the neighbourhood of Polstead, but I frequently visited at the house, and had a good opportunity of forming an opinion of his character.

*John Bugg*, examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I am a labourer, and a looker-on over one of Mrs. Corder's farms. I have known the prisoner ever since he was a baby. He always appeared to be kind and humane.

*John Pryke*, examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I am a farmer, and live six miles from Mrs. Corder's house at Polstead. I have known William Corder intimately from a child; we were school-fellows together. I never heard any thing since to the contrary that he was a kind, humane young man. I believe him to have been such.

*Mary Kersey*, examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I live in Bury, but am acquainted with Corder and his family. I know the prisoner to have been a kind, good-tempered young man.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Kelly*.—I am a relation of the prisoner's by marriage. I am his cousin.



Mr. *Broderick*.—And that circumstance has made you better acquainted with his character than you otherwise would have been ?

*Witness*.—Yes, Sir, it has.

*Jeremiah Boreham* (the prisoner's brother-in-law), examined by Mr. *Broderick*.—I am a miller, and live at Sproughton. I have known Corder from his childhood. I never knew any thing of him but as being a kind young man—that's the character.

*William Baalham* examined.—I live at Polstead, and am the son of John Baalham, the constable. I have known Corder several years. I am twenty-one, and he is twenty-four or twenty-five years old. He used to appear to me to be a kind, humane, good-tempered young man.

---

#### CHARGE OF THE LORD CHIEF BARON TO THE JURY.

A little before twelve o'clock, his Lordship began to sum up the case as follows :—

#### GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY,

The prisoner at the bar, William Corder, stands indicted for the wilful murder of Maria Marten, and the law requires that the question as to the mode by which the life of the deceased has been destroyed, should be brought before you in an indictment, in which the manner of the murder shall be particularly stated. The present indictment, therefore, contains the charge against the prisoner in a variety of ways. It states that the deceased had come to her death by means of the prisoner ; first,

by a discharge of fire-arms; then by wounds inflicted by a sharp instrument; then by strangulation; and, in the last place, by her being buried alive in the ground, and suffocated.

Gentlemen, this was done, in order to have the indictment supported by evidence in whatever way the evidence might turn out; and if you shall be of opinion that he has caused the death of this unfortunate young woman, by one, two, three, or all of the modes mentioned in this indictment, then you will have sufficient evidence to support it, and the Crown will have a right to expect that you will find the prisoner guilty.

Gentlemen, before I enter into detail, and address you upon the circumstances of this very important case, I feel it my duty to advert to something which the prisoner has said, and very properly said, relative to the prejudices which have been raised against him, not only in the county of Suffolk, but throughout the kingdom generally.

It is very unfortunate, indeed I may say extremely so, whenever such prejudices are raised, inasmuch as they often place the life of the prisoner in more jeopardy than the ordinary circumstances of the case which may be brought against him might otherwise do. Sorry, indeed, am I to say that, constituted as society is in the present day, this ground of complaint cannot be avoided. It appears that accounts of this transaction have found their way into the newspapers, but I should imagine that those accounts only related to the charge at the commencement of the business. Whatever they were, those statements were *ex parte*, and given without the prisoner having an opportunity of urging anything in his defence against them; and, therefore, I am free to say that such publications are certainly mischievous and injurious to him. Gentlemen, you have a more important task to perform, for you have to decide on both sides



of the question, whereas the public have heard one side only. We have also been told that placards have been dispersed, not only in the neighbourhood where the transaction took place—not only in the neighbourhood of this town,—but in the vicinity of this very hall,—tending to the manifest detriment of the prisoner at the bar. Such a practice is so ungenerous and unjust, that I cannot bring myself to give credence that any person, even of the very lowest class of society, can so far degrade himself as to attempt a derivation of gain from the exhibition of this melancholy transaction.

Gentlemen, there is another circumstance to which the prisoner has alluded in his defence, and to which I must advert,—and which I trust, for the sake of religion, is a mistake—a mistake it must be; there must have been some misrepresentation; but it is a circumstance which I am bound to notice, and that is the assertion, that a minister of the gospel quitted the place where he usually performed divine service, and erected his pulpit very near the scene of this melancholy tragedy; and there endeavoured to inflame the passions and excite the resentment of the populace against the prisoner, of whom he knew nothing, except by rumour, of his having had any share or participation in the transaction. Whatever might have been the motives of this person, his declamation could only have had the tendency of exciting resentment against a person for an alleged and atrocious offence, when there was no proof of his having committed it. Whoever this person may have been, I cannot conceive any act which is more contrary to the spirit and principles of the religion of which he professes himself to be a minister; and if we have been rightly informed of his conduct, the man who has been guilty of such conduct deserves the severest reprobation. I do not know who the individual is who is said to have degraded and misconducted himself so much; I trust

that we are all labouring under some mistake upon this point, and that this outrage upon decency has not been committed; and I mention the circumstance for the sole purpose of requesting you to dismiss from your minds every impression which may have lodged there in consequence of such a report having gone forth to the world.

I also beseech you, Gentlemen, to dismiss from your minds every consideration, every impression, which you may have derived relative to this case, either from seeing or hearing the newspapers; from seeing placards in the streets, or anything you may have heard respecting the sermon which has been alluded to—if I may dignify it by that name,—preached, as it is said to have been, in the place where, and on the occasion when, the murder was discovered\*.

\* What the learned Judge appears to have apprehended is, we believe, the fact—viz. that his Lordship was *mistaken*. It was represented by the learned counsel for the prisoner, that the sermon, upon the delivery of which his Lordship so severely animadverted, was preached *in* the Red Barn, and that the minister in his discourse frequently designated Corder to have been the murderer of Maria Marten. The fact is, that the service took place on a piece of waste ground, situate *within sight* of the barn, and not within it. We were informed by a person of intelligence (not a dissenter), who was present at the time, that the preacher confined his allusions, to this melancholy catastrophe, to the fact which *had* transpired—viz. the untimely end of Maria Marten, without insinuating by whose hand she was consigned to a premature death, but left his hearers to form their own opinions, and draw their own conclusions, from sources of information which they possessed, and of which the preacher, being a stranger, could have no knowledge. Had this itinerant preacher uttered the remarks attributed to him, with a view to excite and prejudice the multitude against a fellow-creature, who was awaiting the solemn ordeal of a trial, we consider that no language of reprobation could have been too severe.

With regard to ourselves, we freely acknowledge that *ex parte* statements ought not to be relied on; and that nothing should be published before the trial of a prisoner which might be likely to prejudice him in the remotest degree. Upon this principle we acted; for, although the country teemed with garbled accounts, we abstained from issuing a Number of our History, until the



Gentlemen, it is for you to decide entirely upon the evidence which has been laid before you, and you will give the case for the prosecution that weighty consideration which public justice demands that it should receive at your hands ; and, at the same time, you will not fail to remember, that the prisoner has a paramount demand upon you : you will, therefore, consider his case with that deliberation which a due regard for his life and interests equally demands.

This, Gentlemen of the Jury, is my earnest commendation to you ; and I trust, indeed I am certain, that you will pay the requisite attention, and discharge your important functions in such a manner as to cause you no ground for regret hereafter.

Gentlemen, the course which has just been adopted by the prisoner, and he has been very ably advised (as we all know), renders it unnecessary for me to restate a very considerable part of that evidence which the Court has been occupied two days in receiving. If the defence of the prisoner had taken a different turn from that which it has taken, I should have thought it my bounden duty first of all to have asked you, whether you are satisfied to conviction that Maria Marten had been

irrevocable decree had gone forth, in regard to the prisoner, "Thou shalt die, and not live."

(For a brief account of the sermon to which the learned Judge alluded, vide page 59.)

Considerable stress was also laid by the Judge upon a *Camera obscura* which was standing within the very purlieus of the judgment-seat, but his Lordship must have received an exaggerated account in regard to that also. All that was to be seen in this "puppet-show" was a print of the Red Barn, which, by the aid of a powerful magnifying glass, appeared twenty times larger than the original dimensions of the print, which was to be seen in every picture-shop in the town of Bury. The placard attached to this caravan had no reference to the exhibition, but was merely a notice, that a correct likeness of William Corder, price sixpence, might be purchased at a shop near the Abbey-gate, Bury.

destroyed at all, either by the prisoner at the bar, or by any other person ; and then, whether you were convinced that the body found in the barn was her body or not. In that case, I should have pointed out to you how uncertain the identification of the body was, from the state of decomposition in which it was found ; and I should nevertheless have pointed out to you that there were strong circumstances which tended to prove its identity with Maria Marten,—as, for instance, the excrescence, or wen on the neck, and the different articles of dress which have been spoken to as hers, with a degree of certainty, inasmuch as they had not undergone so much decomposition as the human substance they are supposed to have covered. All these remarks, however, are now rendered unnecessary—for the prisoner avows to us, in his defence, that the body discovered in the Red Barn was the body of Maria Marten. Upon this ground I am released, Gentlemen, from addressing you upon that part of the case, as it is admitted to you by the prisoner himself, that the body, the discovery of which has given rise to this trial, is the body of Maria Marten, for the murder of whom he stands indicted. The prisoner admits that he buried her in the barn ; and therefore we are relieved from one of the difficulties of the case.

The next part of the evidence to which I shall call your attention, is that which regards the different accounts which the prisoner gave, after the disappearance of Maria Marten, of the various places at which she was living ; for those accounts certainly have considerable bearing on his defence.

Perhaps I might be relieved from the necessity of alluding to that part of the evidence altogether ; but the manner of the prisoner's avowal may, when closely considered, be of some assistance in enabling us to discover the truth of his statement, that her



death was occasioned by a voluntary act of suicide on her part. I shall not omit reading any of the evidence which relates to this important point, unless you, Gentlemen, state to me that it is your opinion that there is no necessity for me to do so. Gentlemen, I shall now look at the evidence, and remark upon such parts of it as appear to me to require me to do so.

Ann Marten, the step-mother of the deceased, has stated, that the prisoner said in effect, "the reason why I go to Ipswich to-day is, because John Baalham, the constable, came into the stable this morning, and informed me that he had got a letter from Mr. Whitmore, and that in that letter there was a warrant to have Maria taken up to be prosecuted on account of her bastard children." This, Gentlemen, is very important and material for your consideration, inasmuch as it bears immediately upon the prisoner's defence—it shows that he endeavoured to seduce her from home, by holding out to her a terror which had no existence in reality. You will, however, consider, Gentlemen, how far this is, or is not, evidence to contradict the statement made by the prisoner. It appears also, from the testimony of the same witness, that Maria was very low-spirited on the day she left the cottage to go to the Red Barn, and moreover that she had been so for some time past. This is a circumstance, Gentlemen, which you ought not to omit taking into consideration in your review of the whole case. I beg also to direct your consideration to that part of Mrs. Marten's evidence where she swears that the prisoner snapped his pistols twice or thrice by the fire-side before he went to the Red Barn, and that, too, in the presence of the family—a circumstance which proved that, at that time, the pistols were rather in the possession of the prisoner, than of the deceased young woman, Maria Marten.

Gentlemen, I will now call your attention to the evidence of Thomas Marten, the father of this unfortunate woman, and particularly to that part of it in which the old man said, that in searching for the body, he put a spike into it about the hip, but the smallest end of that spike was thicker than the thinnest part of his little finger, and that it grew broader upwards.

[The learned Judge made some slight allusions to minor points of the evidence of several witnesses; the substance of which testimony has been already detailed.]

Gentlemen, I beg you now to direct your attention to the evidence of James Lea, the police-officer, and I am glad to find, from his testimony, that the depositions were read over to the prisoner after the Coroner's Inquest; and this is a point upon which I will make a few remarks before I close my address.

Gentlemen, it is a very extraordinary circumstance, if what the prisoner stated to-day is true, that he did not say a syllable about it to Lea, at the time he was apprehended; but, on the contrary, he stated repeatedly that he never knew any such person as Maria Marten, although he had been informed that he was the person suspected of the murder. I am glad to find that the depositions were read over to the prisoner, by the Coroner, at the Jury Room, at the Cock, at Polstead, after the evidence had been deliberately taken, as it takes away the sting of the accusation which had been made against Mr. Wayman.

Gentlemen, I now wish particularly to direct your attention to the evidence of Mr. Lawton, the surgeon, as the testimony of that gentleman is very important indeed, not only as it respects the wound by a pistol-ball, but also respecting the wounds in the neck, heart, and ribs of the deceased, and



which the witness is of opinion were inflicted with a sharp instrument. You will observe, also, that the same witness talks of the possibility of strangulation by a handkerchief tied round the neck of the unfortunate young woman.

Gentlemen, you have heard it asserted this day, that this truly ill-fated girl had committed suicide; but if that be so, it appears exceedingly strange that, immediately on the prisoner abruptly quitting the barn and leaving her alone, she should have used such various instruments in order to destroy herself; for it appears that she must have fired a pistol, and, either before or after she discharged it, must have stabbed herself, in various parts of the body, with some sharp instrument.

Gentlemen, it will be your important duty to say what credit you can give to the statements which have been made by the medical practitioners who have been examined, in regard to the stabs on the neck and heart; and then if you give credit to them, you will consider what inferences you ought to draw from them, as to the story which has this day been told you by the prisoner at the bar.

Gentlemen, let me again remind you, that you have heard what the prisoner has said in his defence, namely, that the body discovered in the Red Barn is the body of Maria Marten, and that he buried it there himself. The prisoner has also admitted that the several representations which he made to various persons, of her being alive after she left her father's cottage, were untrue; but you will observe the reason he alleges for having propagated those falsehoods. He has told you, that he found it necessary to do so in consequence of the alarm which he naturally felt from a catastrophe such as he has minutely described to you.

Gentlemen, the prisoner has told you that on the 18th of May, 1827, he and Maria set out from the cottage of Thomas Marten, her father, to go to the

Red Barn, in order to go from thence to Ipswich to be married. He says, that on the way to the barn a dispute arose, and the deceased cried very much, and that when they arrived there, words of a more passionate nature ensued, and that her conduct became very violent, so that the prisoner says he considered himself insulted by her upbraidings; and, in the moment of irritation, went out of the barn and left her, having previously remonstrated with her, and said, "If you go on in this way before we are married, what can I expect afterwards?" He says, that he then told her, "he would not marry her, and that she might act as she thought proper for the future." He has told you, that almost immediately after he left the barn he heard the report of a pistol, which induced him to turn back; and upon re-entering the barn, he found Maria lying on the floor mortally wounded. He has likewise said, that by being alarmed at the awful catastrophe thus brought about, he was induced to bury her; and the manner in which he has attempted to account for the representations of her being still alive, he has also detailed in your hearing.

Gentlemen, it is upon the truth or falsehood of his representations to-day that *you* have to decide; therefore, I will abstain from giving any opinion of my own upon that point. You have also heard the evidence for the defence which only goes to show that the prisoner was deemed of a mild temper and humane character. Upon this, Gentlemen, I have only one remark to make; and that is, that character, however good it may have been, can be of no avail where it comes in opposition to direct and conclusive evidence—it is only where the balance is equal that the evidence of character can lend its preponderating influence, so as to be of use to the party accused.

Gentlemen, I will not trouble you with further observations upon this case, because I am quite



satisfied that your own good sense, after the patient attention you have manifested during this long, painful, and important inquiry, renders such a step quite unnecessary.

A complaint has been made, however, with respect to the conduct of the Coroner, which it is requisite for me to notice. I am of opinion, that when the depositions taken before the Coroner were read over to the prisoner, after the Inquest, the prisoner had received all the advantages which he, by law, had a right to expect, and therefore he had no right to complain.

The object of a Coroner's Inquest is not to charge any person with murder, but to ascertain how the death of the deceased happened. The Inquest is conducted by the Crown, as the guardian of the lives of all the subjects in the realm, and, strictly speaking, an accused person has no right to be present at such an inquiry. If, however, a person was found guilty of murder by a Coroner's Inquest, it would be a great hardship upon him were he not allowed to know upon what evidence he had been so declared guilty. But when that evidence is communicated to him afterwards, the accused person has no right either to complain or to cast ungenerous reflections upon others.

It appears to me, Gentlemen, from the evidence of Lea the officer, that, in this particular case, the depositions of the witnesses were read over to the prisoner by the Coroner; the prisoner had, therefore, all the information necessary for him to shape his defence against the day of trial, so as to enable him to refute the evidence, had it been in his power to do so. I believe it is usual at Coroners' Inquests to allow parties likely to be implicated by the evidence, to be present if they desire it, but this privilege they could not demand as a matter of right.

Gentlemen, having made these remarks, it becomes my duty again to tell you, that the real question

in this case for your decision is this, “ Are the representations made by the prisoner to-day true, or false?” If you shall be of opinion that they are true, the prisoner is entitled to your acquittal. His representation is, that the deceased shot herself with his pistol, which she had clandestinely got into her possession, and the evidence certainly shows that his pistols were once in her possession when she lived at Sudbury; but still there was no evidence to show that they continued in her separate possession, but, on the contrary, there was much to show that they did not. The prisoner wishes to have it supposed that the deceased had carried these pistols in her pocket to the Red Barn. Gentlemen, the prisoner has seen the mother and sister of Maria Marten in the witness-box, and he might have cross-examined them upon that point. Not a single question, however, has been put to either of them to show that Maria Marten had those pistols in her separate possession before or at the time she left her father’s cot.

So far as any evidence at all has been adduced respecting these pistols, they appear to have been in the prisoner’s possession and not hers, for he was seen snapping them before the fire previously to his departure from Marten’s cottage with the deceased. That which has forcibly struck me, Gentlemen, from the beginning of the defence to the end, as the most extraordinary feature in it, is the manner in which this alleged suicide is said to have been committed. We all know that it is a circumstance which too often happens, that poor girls, when they have been disappointed in their expectations, have laid rash hands upon themselves; but then the mode of their death is usually very simple—they generally have recourse to strangulation or poison. In this case, if you give credit to the evidence of the surgeons, the wounds inflicted on the body of Maria Marten were of a double description. There were, first, the wounds in the



eye and in the cheek, inflicted by a ball ; and then the wounds inflicted with a sharp instrument, that was broader on one side than on the other, on the heart and ribs ; and the wound inflicted with a similar instrument on the vertebræ of the neck behind the skull. It is a very extraordinary thing, that instead of hanging herself upon a tree, as poor infatuated and disappointed girls generally do in such circumstances, Maria Marten should have used two different means to kill herself—the one by shooting herself with a pistol, which was a very unusual weapon for a female to kill herself with ; and the other by stabbing herself with a sharp instrument.

Gentlemen, I repeat it again, you must decide upon the credibility of the medical witnesses, who have all of them ventured to speak as to these two distinct causes of Maria Marten's death, independently of the third mode of death by strangulation, to which one of them has spoken ; and, if you decide that the wounds have been inflicted in the manner in which the surgeons have described, you will then have to consider how far it was possible, or whether possible at all, that all these multifarious wounds could have been inflicted by her own hands.

I have passed over a great many observations I should have made with regard to the remnants of clothing and other things which were found on and about the deceased, which were produced to prove the identity of the person ; because the confession of the prisoner has precluded the necessity of any such observations.

Gentlemen, these are the facts of the case as proved in evidence, which you will have to consider ; and I trust that Almighty God will so direct your judgments that you may come to a right decision. If you have any, even the least, doubt upon the evidence which you have heard from the lips of the witnesses, and which I have recapitulated to

you in order to assist your memories, it is your bounden duty to give the prisoner the full benefit of it. But on the other hand, should you be thoroughly satisfied that the representations made by him to-day are false, and that he is the person who committed the crime of murder on the body of Maria Marten, then it will be your duty to serve your country manfully and fearlessly, and, at the same time, discharge with fidelity the solemn oath which you have sworn, by returning a verdict of guilty against the prisoner, regardless of the consequences with which that verdict will be followed in respect of the prisoner at the bar!!

The Learned Judge was nearly two hours in delivering his charge, and the most profound silence prevailed in court. During several parts of it his lordship appeared considerably affected.

---

#### RETIRING OF THE JURY.

The Foreman of the Jury then addressed the Learned Judge on behalf of himself and fellow-jurors, and said, "My Lord, if it please your Lordship, we wish to retire, as the important case requires some time to be spent in deliberation upon it."

*Lord Chief Baron.*—"Certainly, Gentlemen, by all means, let an officer be sworn."

One of the bailiffs having been sworn not to allow any communications between the panel, and any other person, the gentlemen were conducted out of Court\*.

\* In consequence of the retiring of the Jury, and as they remained a considerable time in their deliberations, the friends of the prisoner, and many others anticipated that they would



DEMEANOUR OF THE PRISONER DURING THE  
TIME THE LEARNED JUDGE WAS SUMMING  
UP THE EVIDENCE.

To prevent the breaking in upon the uniformity of our narrative, we deem it right, while the Jury are out of Court, to detail a few particulars relative to the behaviour of the prisoner during the latter part of the trial.

After the prisoner had read his defence, he appeared to be considerably exhausted, and sighed frequently and deeply; but when his Lordship commenced his summing up, and began to state

return a verdict of acquittal, in which, however, they were wofully disappointed. Several rumours have been afloat in consequence of this retirement, and it was said, that on the evening of the first day of the trial, two of the Jurors were of opinion, that the identity of the body had not been fully proved, and that they were determined to return a verdict in favour of the prisoner. It should be recollected, however, that several witnesses then remained to be examined; not only two surgeons, but the mother and sister of the deceased had to be recalled to identify the clothes, &c., as having been the same, or parts of the same, apparel in which Maria went out on the day of the murder. Another report was, that, even after all, a favourable verdict would have been returned, but for the prisoner's defence.

We took some pains to ascertain the truth of these rumours, and the result was, that we were informed, from the best authority, (i. e. from some of the panel themselves) that the greatest unanimity of opinion prevailed amongst them, and that, at the close of the first day, none of them considered the identity to be fully proved, but they never formed any judgment upon the result, as they were fully aware that there were other witnesses awaiting examination, the nature of whose testimony they would not assume to know. We have reason also to know, that supposing that the prisoner had not adopted the line of defence he did, that the militating testimony was complete; but of course that defence, coupled with that testimony, caused less consultation to be necessary, so th at the withdrawing of the Jury from the Court may be conside red more in the light of a formal solemnity, than for the purpose of deliberating as to what verdict they should return.

the indictment, and the necessity which the law imposed, of proving, to the satisfaction of the Jury; that the death of Maria Marten had been occasioned by one or more of the means laid therein, the prisoner listened with eager attention; but when the Chief Baron told the Jury, that if they were satisfied that the prisoner inflicted any of the wounds which had been named, it would be their duty to find him *guilty*, his countenance fell, and he appeared almost in a lethargic state. During the time, however, that his Lordship was exhorting the Jury to forget all the rumours and reports which they had heard, or allow themselves to be influenced by the fact (if fact it was), that a sermon had been preached to five thousand persons, wherein the prisoner was spoken of as the murderer,—during this time, the prisoner repeatedly bowed towards the bench, as if to acknowledge his obligation for his Lordship's humane consideration.

When his Lordship remarked upon the manner in which Maria was enticed to leave her father's house, by means of a false statement calculated to intimidate her, the words made a deep impression upon the prisoner, and his countenance underwent constant and alternate changes for a few minutes. During the time in which that part of the evidence was referred to, which narrated the extraordinary dialogue between him and Phœbe Stow, as to the impossibility of Maria having any more children,—“that he could go to her any day he pleased,” &c., the prisoner appeared almost in a fainting state; he leaned himself against the pillar at the back of the dock, and, with his eye fearfully rolling, he placed his head upon the iron-railing before him. In a few minutes he recovered self-possession, and stood erect, with his eyes cast on the ground, which he lifted not up excepting when the



Judge was making a favourable remark upon the evidence.

The bare mention of the letters agitated him greatly, but the Judge not reading them, appeared to be a source of satisfaction. When the evidence of Lea the officer was read, stating that the prisoner denied all knowledge of Maria Marten, and the remarks of the Chief Baron that, on being told that her body was found, he did not at once say, "She destroyed herself, and I buried her there," instead of denying that he ever knew her; these remarks also produced a sensible effect upon the prisoner.

When allusion was made to his getting the sword sharpened, he almost fainted, and, we think, would have fallen, but for the interference of Mr. Orridge. While the important evidence of the surgeon was being read, the prisoner moved from side to side, as if unable to maintain one position for many moments together, and as one who had completely lost his self-possession. He was restored, however, by cold water being given to him by the gaoler; some spirits of hartshorn were also applied to his nostrils. When the surgeons gave their evidence, he heaved a sigh, as if in despair, arising from the conviction that his defence would be overturned. Large drops of perspiration now trickled down his face. During the time the last surgeon was giving his evidence, the prisoner scarcely ever lifted up his head, but, nevertheless, he kept moving about from one position to another\*. After this, he seemed to rally for a short time, expecting, no doubt, that the Lord

\* The reason of this peculiar agitation did not arise so much from the nature of the testimony which this gentleman had given, perhaps, as from the painful reminiscences which the prisoner must have had, that himself and the witness had been play-fellows and school-fellows, and that their respective parents once lived in amity as near neighbours.—ED.

Chief Baron would dwell at considerable length upon the matters contained in the defence which he had read; but, when he heard his Lordship barely recite the principal points of his story, passing them over with scarcely a word of comment, he relapsed into his former state of despondency.

---

### RETURN OF THE JURY INTO COURT, AND VERDICT.

The Jury retired at ten minutes before two o'clock, and, after an absence of thirty-five minutes, it was announced that they were about to re-enter the Court. This was an awful moment to the prisoner, and the intense anxiety which was deeply depicted in the countenances of every person present, was very conspicuous. The prisoner now resumed his upright position, and, as the jury had to pass close by him, he cast at them a piercing glance of intense emotion.

Having taken their places in the box, the Clerk of Assize (H. Ashell, Esq.) called over their names, to which they all answered, in those solemn tones which seemed to denote judgment rather than mercy.

The Clerk then asked the Foreman, if they were agreed in their verdict? The answer was, "We are, unanimously."

*Clerk.*—"How say you, gentlemen, is the prisoner at the bar, William Corder, guilty of the murder of which he stands indicted, or not guilty?"

*Foreman*, (in a faltering voice) *GUILTY!!*

*Clerk.*—Hearken to your verdict, gentlemen. You say that William Corder, the prisoner, is *Guilty*, and so you say all?



*Foreman.*—Yes, we do\*.

The prisoner, upon hearing the fatal decision, raised his hand to his forehead, which he pressed for a moment, then instantly dropped it, and his face fell on his bosom.

The prisoner was then asked what he had to say why he should not receive judgment to die according to law? He shook his head, but made no reply.

\* At this moment, between the declaration of the verdict and the passing of the sentence, a slight confusion arose near the place where the prisoner stood, relative to the possession of the pistols, with one of which the murder was committed. Lea, the officer, claimed them as his property, in consequence of a promise which he had received from the prisoner when he first apprehended him, and when, of course, he had a right to dispose of his property. On the other hand, Mr. Orridge was directed to take charge of them, as the property of the Sheriff, in consequence of the verdict which had just been recorded against the prisoner. The Sheriff had previously demanded them, but Lea knowing that no legal demand could be made, until a verdict of guilty was returned against the prisoner, refused to comply with that mandate, to which he at last reluctantly submitted, and they were eventually, together with the sword, delivered to the Governor of the prison.

Lea went in the evening to the Under-Sheriff, and complained that he had not been used well. He considered the pistols were his own property, and, but for the ends of justice, he need not have produced them at all. Mr. Holmes, the Under-Sheriff, referred Lea to Mr. Orridge, and that gentleman told him that the High Sheriff had taken them home in his carriage, and that, when the demand of the officer was made, he exclaimed, "Me part with them? No, not for one hundred pounds: these are all that I shall get during my shrievalty!"

We understand that the magistrates of Lambeth Street Office are of opinion that the pistols belong to Lea, and that a formal demand will be made for the Sheriff to resign them.

It is singular that when Bellingham was convicted of the murder of Mr. Perceval, a similar anxiety was displayed by the officers of justice to retain the weapon by which his death had been inflicted. In that case, one of the sheriffs, as the representative of the Crown, got possession of the fatal pistol. He was not, however, allowed to keep it, for the Secretary of State for the Home Department claimed it on the very same ground, from the Sheriff, and the subordinate minister of justice was obliged to relinquish his prize, at the command of his superior.

The Crier of the Court then commanded all persons to keep profound silence while

### SENTENCE OF DEATH

was passed upon the prisoner.

*The Lord Chief Baron* then withdrew the black coif from the pocket of his robe, and placing it upon his head, he addressed the prisoner as follows :—

WILLIAM CORDER, it now becomes my most painful but necessary duty to announce to you the near approach of your mortal career, (the prisoner shuddered convulsively.) You have been accused of Murder, which is the highest offence that can be found in the long annals of crime. You denied your guilt, and put yourself upon your deliverance to your country. After a long, a patient, and an impartial trial, a jury of that country has decided against you, and that decision is most just. You stand convicted of an aggravated breach of the great prohibition of the Supreme Being—the Almighty Creator of mankind—" *Thou shalt do no Murder.*"

The law of this country, in concurrence with the law of all civilized nations, enforces this prohibition of God, by exacting from the criminal who has violated it the forfeiture of his own life. "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." This is the divine mandate which must be enforced against you. And, as the offence of murder indicates the highest degree of cruelty to its unfortunate victim, and as it is dangerous to the peace, the good order, and the security of society, Justice is bound to assume upon it her severest aspect, and allows no emotion of pity to shield the criminal



from the punishment awarded to it both by the laws of God and of man.

My advice to you is, not to flatter yourself with the slightest hope of mercy on earth. You sent this unfortunate young woman to her account, with all her imperfections upon her head, without allowing her any time for preparation. She had not time to lift up her eyes to a throne of grace, to implore mercy and forgiveness for her manifold transgressions—she had no time allowed her to repent of her sins—no time granted to throw herself upon her knees, to implore pardon at the Eternal Throne!

The same measure which you meted to her is not meted out to you again. A small interval is allowed you for preparation. Let me earnestly entreat you to use it well—the scene of this world closes upon you—but, I hope, another and a better world will open to your view. Remember the lessons of religion, which you, doubtless, received in your childhood—consider the effects which may be produced by a hearty and sincere repentance—listen to the voice of the ministers of religion who will, I trust, advise and console you, so that you may be able to meet with becoming resignation and fortitude that dreadful ordeal which you will have shortly to undergo.

Nothing remains now for me to do, but to pass upon you the awful sentence of the law, and that sentence is—That you be taken back to the prison from whence you came, and that you be taken from thence, on Monday next, to a place of Execution, and that you there be *Hanged by the Neck until you are Dead*; and that your body shall afterwards be dissected and anatomized; and may the Lord God Almighty, of his infinite goodness, have mercy on your soul!

During part of this solemn address, the prisoner preserved some degree of firmness; but at the

close of it, he would have sunk to the ground had he not been prevented by the compassionate attention of Mr. Orridge, the governor, who caught him in his arms, and, with the assistance of one of his officers, carried the sobbing criminal from the bar. Indeed, it was quite evident to every observer, that at this moment his faculties, both mental and bodily, were completely paralyzed; but he did not swoon, as has been reported.

During the interval between his removal from the bar and his return to the prison, he sat in one of the cells, with his head buried in his hands, his elbows resting on his knees, and he laboured acutely under the severest emotions.

The Lord Chief Baron left the Court, very much affected, immediately after the fatal sentence had been pronounced by him, his carriage being in waiting to convey his Lordship to Norwich.

A considerable time elapsed before the officers could clear the Court, such was the desire of the public to press toward the cell where Corder was confined, to have another view of him. At the conclusion of the sentence, a lady, who is on terms of intimacy with the Corder family, and who had given evidence on his behalf, fainted away, and it was with considerable difficulty that she was restored to her senses: indeed, several persons in the Court were affected to tears, not, perhaps, on the prisoner's account, but owing to the solemnity with which the Judge concluded the last act *but one* of the tragical drama of the *Polstead Murder*.



## RETURN TO GAOL.

The Court having, at length, been cleared, the handcuffs were put upon the prisoner, and he was conducted toward the outer door, where the chaise-cart which had conducted him thither was waiting to convey him back. The prisoner made a great effort to rally his drooping spirits, and he partly succeeded. The crowd, who are always eager to catch a glimpse of every character notorious for good or evil, opposed all obstacles which were likely to impede the gratification of their curiosity. Although the javelin-men, and an extra posse of constables were stationed round the cart, it was impossible for them, without using absolute force, to keep off the crowd. At length, the prisoner made his appearance, when the populace climbed upon the wheels and steps of the chaise and the latter were actually broken off\*. Corder jumbled himself into the cart, and endeavoured to avoid the gaze of the public as much as possible; he, however, gave a nod of recognition to two persons, who bid him "Good bye!"

It was supposed by some that the emotion manifested by the prisoner was assumed by him in order to excite the sympathy of superficial observers; but we are of opinion that the idea was incorrectly formed; for, devoid as Corder was of humanity, he was not destitute of common sense, and he well knew that he could not excite the sympathy of any

\* We cannot refrain from bearing testimony to the humanity displayed by the officers of the sheriff, who on the most pressing occasions endeavoured, as much as possible, to avoid inflicting those injuries which are often suffered through the brutality of those *Jacks in office*, yclept a constabulary force.

well-constituted mind\*. The cart was at length enabled to proceed without further accident, and it was swiftly driven to the gaol, followed by a vast concourse, and the streets and windows of the houses, near to which the prisoner had to pass, were literally thronged, and hundreds had preceded the vehicle, and arrived at the gaol to see him alight. When he got there he jumped to the ground (the step having been lost), and immediately, for the last time, entered the door of the prison. During all his bustle there was no ebullition of public feeling either on the one side or the other; the populace being apparently swayed by one only motive—curiosity.

It was quite evident to those who had the best opportunity of judging from appearances, that the prisoner felt that he returned to the gaol in a different character from that in which he had left it. All the presumptions and reservations which the humane policy of our law sometimes throw around a prisoner, whose life is at stake, were removed, and he had to re-enter the walls of his prison, for the few hours which were counted to him in this world, as a person no longer to be mentioned among his species, and whose annihilation was demanded by the laws of that community of which he was once a member. This retributive change of circumstances removed him from a convenient apartment in the front of the prison to a condemned cell, and forced him to exchange his fashionable attire for the gaol apparel. The governor of the prison, whose huma-

\* It was currently reported, and in some respects truly, that some of the females of his family had been so deluded by representations similar to the pitiful fiction of his defence, that, during his trial, they were preparing for his return to that decent station in society which he had, with such unparalleled atrocity, disgraced by the flagrant violation of all those household duties, which reflect a peculiar character upon the middle classes of society in this country. A chaise had actually been bespoke to convey the prisoner to Polstead.



nity to the unfortunates under his care is proverbial, led Corder, on his return to prison, into his private room, where he (probably from the recollection of the recent suicide of the convict Montgomery) plainly but mildly told the prisoner that he must immediately exchange the whole of his apparel, because his (the governor's) situation, with reference to him, was one of great responsibility, and that he had a serious duty to discharge, which he was, however, ready to perform with every attention to the rational wants of a prisoner in his awful situation.

Corder almost immediately exchanged his clothes for those which were supplied from the prison stock, having previously given to his solicitor his defence and some written papers. During this time a gentleman present said to Corder, that the evidence against him was of too conclusive a nature to be parried off by evasion and external appearances, and that it was not only due to his own peace of mind, but also to his family, that he should make a disclosure of all the facts. To this provident, and, we cannot help saying, humane suggestion, the prisoner made no reply, but endeavoured to divert the conversation into another channel by making inquiries about his wife, who appeared to be uppermost in his mind, and he implored that she might be permitted to visit him. Mr. Orridge again repeated that he should have every consolation and indulgence which the law of the land and the rules of the prison permitted, but he must not expect from henceforth that any person would be allowed to see him, except in the presence of one of the officers of the gaol.

The prisoner was also told that, although it was imperative that he should wear the prison dress during the interval between this time and Monday, he would be at full liberty to exchange it on that morning, previous to his going to the fatal platform, if he thought proper.

This conversation ended, and the prisoner having partaken of a slight repast, he was conducted to his cell, where he was strictly attended by two persons, in order to prevent the possibility of his committing suicide.

---

#### INTERVAL BETWEEN THE CONDEMNATION AND EXECUTION.

*(Friday Night.)*

After Corder had been removed to his cell, his spirits appeared greatly revived, and he became rather loquacious than otherwise. Mr Orridge paid him a visit, and remained with him until half-past ten o'clock.

The room in which Corder was placed was in an airy situation, and had two windows to admit light; an apartment very superior to the gloomy recesses in which criminals were formerly confined, before the improvements recently introduced into our country prisons.

During the time Mr. Orridge was with the prisoner, he canvassed over and remarked upon the credibility of some of the witnesses that had appeared against him. Alluding to the evidence, generally, he said, it was extremely incorrect, and he particularly dwelt upon the evidence of George Marten, the deceased's brother, who had unequivocally sworn that he saw him going from the Red Barn towards his mother's house with a pick-axe on his shoulder. This, he said, was quite impossible, for he could not see him.

To which Mr. Orridge replied, "You cannot be confident of that, because it was possible for a person to see you although you could not see the observer." Corder said, "True," and nothing more was said about the pick-axe. Mr. Orridge asked



how he came to go to the barn. He replied, "I cannot tell." In reference to the sword or dirk, Mr. Orridge asked him if he had ever been in the army; he said, he never had, nor did he ever intend to make the sea his profession, though it was the wish of his friends. He added, "I procured the sword for *another purpose*." Mr. Orridge then said, "What could have induced you to have told Maria Marten that there was a warrant against her for bastardy, when you prevailed on her to change her dress and go with you to the Red Barn?" To this question the prisoner said nothing, and hung down his head.

After a short interval, he again adverted to the trial, and said the evidence was very incorrect, for there was no necessity for him to inflict the stabs upon Maria, because she expired instantaneously.

Mr. Orridge, at length, said, perhaps it was useless and unprofitable to talk upon the subject any longer, as it could not be remedied, and might, perhaps, tend to agitate his mind. He recommended the culprit to give his entire attention to the reverend Chaplain, who would, no doubt, impart such advice as would induce him to disclose that which was a weighty burden on his conscience, and which disclosure might tend to strengthen his hope of passing from this to a better world. The Governor then left him for the night.

Shortly after this, Corder leisurely stripped himself, and went to bed, and before the prison clock announced the hour of eleven, he was in a profound sleep; but during the night he was very restless. He could not say,

"Calm and composed my soul her journey takes,  
No guilt that troubles, and no heart that aches."

About four o'clock, he was awoke by one of his attendants stirring the fire, but fell asleep again,

and remained so until six, at which early hour the Reverend Mr. Stocking, who was feelingly alive for the spiritual welfare of the prisoner, arrived at the gaol, and remained with the wretched man for two hours.

When speaking upon the subject of confession, Corder asked one of his attendants in what way he thought it would benefit his soul were he to unfold the follies of his life to the view of the world? He added, such a *disclosure would only disgrace* my family, upon whom sufficient stigma had been cast already.

The attendant (a very intelligent man, whose name, from motives of delicacy, we forbear to mention) replied, that there was no necessity for him to enter into a long detail of the history of his past life; all that could be required of him was to acknowledge his guilt, and that justice had been done unto him. To this Corder made no reply.

The following dialogue also took place in the evening between him and his attendant, which being reported to Mr. Orridge, he was induced to interrogate the prisoner upon the truth of it. We subjoin both accounts although in effect they are nearly the same.

#### ATTENDANT'S ACCOUNT.

*Attendant.*—Pray, Mr. Corder, is it true that it was by an advertisement you were first introduced to Mrs. Corder?

*Corder.*—Indeed it was.

*Attendant.*—Had you many answers to it?

*Corder.*—I had forty-five\*. Some from ladies in their carriages.

\* Notwithstanding the prisoner only received forty-five letters.



*Attendant.*—Well, that surprises me.

*Corder.*—Surprise you? so it may, as it did myself; but I missed of a good thing.

*Attendant.*—How is that?

*Corder.*—Why, then, I will tell you. One of the answers which I received, required that I should be at a certain church on an appointed day, dressed in a particular way, and I should meet a lady, also dressed in a particular way, and both understanding what we came about, no further introduction was necessary.

*Attendant.*—But how could you know her? there might be another lady dressed in the same way?

*Corder.*—Oh! to guard against a mistake, she desired that I should wear a black handkerchief round my neck, and have my left arm in a sling; and in case I should not observe her, she would discover, and introduce herself.

*Attendant.*—And did you meet her?

*Corder.*—No, I did not; I went, but not in time, as the service was over when I got there.

*Attendant.*—Then when you did not meet her, how do you know that she was respectable?

*Corder.*—Because the pew-opener told me that such a lady was inquiring for a gentlemen of my description; and she came in an elegant

there were fifty-three other answers which never reached his hands, (making ninety-eight in the whole,) which, with other original documents, will be found in the concluding part of this history

carriage, and was a young woman of fortune. (Sighing heavily.)

*Attendant.*—Then you never saw her afterwards?

*Corder.*—No, never; but I found out where she lived, and who she was, and would have had an interview with her, were it not that I became acquainted with Mrs. Corder, from whom I was not a day absent until we were married.

*Attendant.*—Was that long after your acquaintance?

*Corder* —About a week.

#### MR. ORRIDGE'S CORROBORATION.

In the course of the evening he mentioned the particulars of his marriage; he stated that he left home the latter end of September; that he went to Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, and Southampton; that he returned to London in about two months, and then advertised for a wife; that he had forty-five applications to the Advertisement, and that one of them was from a lady who wrote to him to say, that she should go to church in a certain dress, and sit in a particular place; and requesting him to go to church with his left arm in a black sling, a black handkerchief round his neck, and place himself in such a position that she might see him, and then judge if a personal interview would be desirable. I told him that he might consider himself extremely fortunate under all circumstances, to have met with a woman who would act with that kindness which Mrs. Corder had manifested during his confinement.



At other times I now and then hinted the necessity of confession. In the course of that day he said, "confession to God was all that was necessary, and that confession to man was what he called Popedom or Popery, and he would never do it." It was hinted to him, some time in the day, that he must have had great nerve, to dig the hole during the time the body lay in his sight. His reply was, "Nobody knows that the body lay in the barn, and in my sight, whilst I dug the hole;" he would then say no more on the subject, but exclaimed, "O God! nobody will dig my grave!"

---

#### VISIT OF MRS. CORDER.

In conformity with the promise made by Mr. Orridge on the over-night, Mrs. Corder was admitted to the prison on Saturday. The ill-fated woman arrived about two o'clock, accompanied by a lady of the name of Atherton, who had long been her intimate friend, and had come down from London for the purpose of affording her society and support during the week in which the trial took place. Mrs. Atherton remained in the governor's office, while Mrs. Corder, leaning on Mr. Orridge's arm, was introduced to her wretched husband. Having been admitted to this heart-rending interview, she presented her husband with a book she had brought for his perusal (*The Companion to the Altar*), and besought him with tears, to read its contents frequently before he partook of the Holy Sacrament. She then threw herself into his arms, and with hysterical sobs, exclaimed, "Well, dearest William, this trial has terminated in a manner quite different from what we all were sanguine enough to expect \*." Corder was much affected at her

\* We have been favoured with a series of letters which form

manner, and while the tears rolled down his cheeks, he expressed his gratitude for her attachment to him, and her undeviating affection through good report and evil report, even, added he, "to the very ignominious close of my wretched life." At intervals, so intense were his feelings, that his tongue refused to perform its office; but when he gained utterance, he said, "I am afraid that the contumely and sneers of the world will be visited on you when your wretched husband is no more." The unfortunate woman kindly entreated him not to let that disturb his mind and distract his attention from the sacred duties of religion, from which alone he could now expect mercy and consolation. "These," said she, "are matters of far greater import than any which relate to myself. Dear William, there is a good and merciful God who will protect me; to Him I look up, and it is from Him, blessed be his name, that in this hour of calamity and distress, I derive support and comfort. He has promised never to leave or forsake those who trust in Him."

She again attempted to abstract his mind from mundane affairs, and urged him to reflect calmly and considerately upon the heavy account which he would shortly have to deliver before that Almighty being of whose goodness she had been speaking; reminding him that God was just as well as mer-

the correspondence between the prisoner and several of his friends and relations during his imprisonment, which will be found in their proper places in this history, and form a most important and interesting feature in the work.

In one of the letters written by the unhappy Mrs. Corder to her husband, she expresses a hope that the result will be favourable, and assigns two reasons why she cannot always look on the dark side of the picture. First, were she to do so, she could not retain her physical strength to enable her to administer to his comforts while in prison. Secondly, were she to dwell upon the anticipation of a disastrous issue, and the result should be favourable, perhaps she might fall a victim to excess of joy, as a lady, whose name she mentioned, did upon another occasion.



ciful. She addressed him with the affection of a wife and the fidelity of a Christian monitor.

After remaining with her wretched partner about half an hour, it was intimated to her that she must withdraw, when she again exhorted her husband to prayer and repentance, and to remember the short space there was between him and an eternal world. She told him, that if he wished to contribute to her future happiness he had only *one* way left by which he could promote it, and that was to convince her that he died a true penitent. After a mutual embrace and affectionate caresses, this faithful help-mate, we had almost said teacher of righteousness, withdrew. Corder was for some time after this interview absorbed in grief, and almost buried in thought, and when he came to himself his conduct and conversation were very different from what they had previously been, and he shortly betook himself to devotional exercises, and with profound attention read the book which Mrs. Corder had left him.

After Mrs. Corder had left her husband and rejoined Mrs. Atherton, she anxiously inquired of Mr. Orridge whether he thought an application to the executive for mercy were likely to be available; or whether, supposing that the law must be carried into effect, a short respite of execution could not be obtained? To this inquiry Mr. Orridge replied, that in a case of so serious a nature he hoped she would excuse him from offering any opinion or advice; she had better, he said, consult her friends and legal advisers, and pursue that course which their and her own good judgment might deem most eligible\*.

\* Before the interview took place, Mr. Orridge told Mrs. Corder that he felt himself compelled, in consequence of a new clause in Lord Lansdowne's Act, to be present during the whole time of her visit, lest she should furnish her husband with some

In the course of this day, Corder attended the chapel, when the Rev. Mr. Stocking read to him an impressive discourse upon the Last Judgment, which appeared to make a due impression upon him, and, indeed, he appeared to join heartily in his private devotions. The reverend gentleman was with him the greater part of the day, and until a late hour in the evening; and, at his departure, the

means by which he might effect his own destruction. Mrs. Corder replied, "If it pleased the Almighty to take him before the time appointed for his execution I should feel most happy; but I would not interfere between God and him upon any consideration. I wish that he may meet his fate with submission rather than afford him any means by which it may be anticipated."

The following enactments are parts of the statute to which Mr. Orridge alluded; and as they have direct allusion to the regulations to be observed by gaolers in regard to murderers we annex them:—

"And be it enacted,—That whenever dissection shall be ordered by such sentence, the body of the murderer, if executed in the county of Middlesex and city of London, shall be immediately conveyed by the sheriff or sheriffs, or his or their officers, to the Hall of the Surgeons' Company, or to such other place as the said Company shall appoint, and shall be delivered to such person as the said Company shall appoint, for the purpose of being dissected; and the body of the murderer, if executed elsewhere, shall, in like manner, be delivered to such surgeon as the Court or Judge shall direct, for the same purpose."—9 Geo. IV., c. 31, § 5.

"And be it enacted,—That every person convicted of murder shall, after judgment, be confined in some safe place within the prison apart from all other prisoners, and shall be fed with bread and water only, and with no other food or liquor, except in case of receiving the sacrament, or in case of any sickness or wound, in which case the surgeon of the prison may order necessaries to be administered. And no person but the gaoler and his servants, and the chaplain and surgeon of the prison, shall have access to any such convict without the permission, in writing, of the Court or Judge before whom such convict shall have been tried, or the Sheriff or his Deputy. Provided always that, in case the Court or Judge shall think fit to respite the execution of such convict, such Court or Judge may, by a license in writing, relax, during the period of the respite, all or any of the restraints or regulations hereinbefore directed to be observed."—9 Geo. IV., c. 31, § 6.



prisoner was attended by two guards, in the same manner as on the preceding night\*.

In the evening of this day (Saturday,) the Rev. Mr. Sheen, the chaplain to the High Sheriff, visited the convict, and remained with him more than half an hour. The reverend gentleman, with that fidelity which should ever characterize a minister of religion, exhorted the wretched man to flee from the wrath to come, and afterwards pointed out in forcible language the strong hold which the Gospel furnishes as a place of refuge to the guilty penitent.

---

#### PREPARATION FOR THE EXECUTION

Among other coincidences which we might mention, relative to Corder and Thurtell, it is not a little singular that, in each instance, a different mode of execution was resorted to, from what had before been practised either at Bury or Hertford.

It had heretofore been usual, at Bury, to conduct the malefactors, after they were pinioned, through the front door, into the high road, and thence to a paddock on the north-east side of the gaol, in the centre of which the drop used to be erected. In consequence of the certainty that a dense crowd would be congregated on the morning of execution, and thus render it impossible to conduct the criminal to the fatal tree, it was resolved that an aperture should be made in the centre of that part of the wall which separates the field from the gaol, so that the prisoner might pass to the

\* These precautions are, undoubtedly, most proper, but there was not much reason to expect that the convict would attempt his own destruction. There was that in his conduct which is natural, viz. a clinging to life; and he was several times heard to speak in abhorrent terms of suicide, and, in allusion to himself, he said, soon after his conviction, "Why should I destroy myself, and thus heap one sin upon another?"

scaffold, which would be erected close to the door way, and to which the procession might proceed without going through the crowd.

In order to effect this alteration, several men were employed on Saturday in making an opening through the wall, and, before night, a door was inserted where the brick-work had been taken away, and thus this preliminary preparation for the exit of the wretched murderer was completed. The alteration appears to be a very judicious one, and there is reason to suppose that, on future melancholy occasions of a similar nature, the new system will be adhered to\*.

---

#### WARRANT FOR EXECUTION.

Before he left Bury, the Lord Chief Baron directed the following Warrant to the High Sheriff of the County, for the execution of the malefactor, and

\* We understand that the way by which he was to be conveyed to the place of execution, was communicated to Corder, who appeared to prefer being thus *accommodated*, instead of having to go through a crowd of rustics, who might, perhaps, salute him with yells of execration, and other discordant sounds. As in all cases where any alteration of a public nature is made, a name must be found to perpetuate it, so this outlet from the prison was designated "Corder's Door." One of the workmen, however, said that he should call it "Corder's Passage to Eternity"

As we have alluded to Thurtell, we cannot omit giving the following anecdote of a conversation which took place between him and the Governor of Hertford Gaol, relative to the mode of executing criminals. One day, while conversing with Mr. Wilson, this notable criminal said jocosely, "Why, I understand, Mr. Wilson, that when you *round* [hang] people here, you put them into a *tumbler* [cart], and send them out of the world with a *gee-up gee-ho*, and I suppose my ears will be saluted with the smack of the whip, but this is rather an old fashioned and ungentlemanly way of *finishing* a man." Probably (says the relator of this anecdote) the magistrates of the county heard of the conversation, and determined to *accommodate* him, by ordering a new drop gallows to be erected, and allowing him to *hansel* it. [Vide Kelly's Newgate Calendar, vol. vi. p. 316.]



which, in point of form, differs materially from those issued anteriorly to the recent revision of the Criminal Laws \*.

Suffolk }  
to wit. }

“ Friday, August 8th, 1828.

“ *William Corder*, this day attainted of the wilful murder of Maria Marten.

“ Let him be hanged by the neck until he be dead, on Monday next, the eleventh day of August, instant; and let his body be delivered to the Surgeons of the Hospital of Bury Saint Edmund's, to be dissected and anatomized pursuant to the Statute.

(Signed) “ W. ALEXANDER,

“ HARRY EDGELL, Clerk of the Assize.”

“ To *Hart Logan, Esquire*,  
and whom it may con-  
cern.”

#### DIVINE SERVICE PRELIMINARY TO THE SERMON.

It having been appointed that the service in the chapel of the prison should commence at nine

\* As the law formerly stood, in regard to the execution of criminals, the usage was for the Judge to sign the printed calendar or list, containing the names of all the prisoners, with their separate judgments in the margin, which, having done, he signed his own name, and left it with the Sheriff. In cases of a capital felony, where the extreme sentence of the law was to be enforced, the Judge wrote opposite the prisoner's name,—“ *Let him be hanged by the neck*,”—which was the only warrant the Sheriff had.

In all cases (murder excepted) the Sheriff is ordered to do execution within a convenient time; but in *London*, more exactness is used, both as to the warrant and the time of executing it.

The Statute 25 Geo. II. c. 37. is, however, unrepealed, and is observed throughout the kingdom; it enacts, “ That in case of *murder*, the Judge shall, in his sentence, direct execution to be performed on the next day but one after sentence is past.”

When a Sunday intervenes, as in Corder's case, it is deemed “ *dies non* ”—no day.







*Mr. Orville*



*The Rev. W. Stocking*

o'clock,—arrangements had been made, through the unremitting kindness of Mr. Orridge, the governor, for the admission and convenience of the gentlemen connected with the public press. After the debtors, confined in the county prison, had taken their seats, the felons were conducted to theirs, the latter being attired in the costume of the prison, which consists of a jacket and trowsers of coarse gray frieze, striped, at intervals, with a yellow bar, bordered by two narrower bars of black.

After the Reverend Mr. Stocking, the Chaplain of the prison, had taken his station at the reading-desk, Corder was conducted by the Governor to that part of the chapel which, on such occasions, is occupied by those only “*who are appointed to die.*” Immediately on entering the pew, he took his seat, and placed his elbow on his knee, holding to his face a white handkerchief, in his right hand, which he seldom removed during the service, nor did he more than once or twice alter the position in which he had originally placed himself. From this circumstance, however, no inference could be drawn by those who knew his manners, because he had invariably sat in that posture, with a view, it is said, of preventing any one from taking the opportunity of examining his features.

It is to be observed, however, that those who had been in company with him were of opinion that his obstinacy was abated, and that he appeared, this morning, more susceptible of religious impressions than he had hitherto been. He was attired in the prison dress, of the same materials and colour which we have already described; but we were informed, that he made no complaint when he exchanged his fashionable surtout, &c. for this degrading suit.



When the Reverend Mr. Stocking began divine service, there was a momentary shuddering observable throughout the whole frame of the prisoner. The reverend gentleman commenced by reading some beautiful prayers and exhortations, penned for such solemn services by the late Reverend S. Russell, in his Prisoner's Directory, which forcibly set forth the necessity of repentance at all times, but more especially when the irrevocable decree had gone forth—"Thou shalt surely die."

The law had expounded, and the Gospel had confirmed, the exposition, that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven;" and this doctrine had been promulgated by the Apostles, who had, among other denunciations, declared that no "murderer" should inherit the regions of bliss. Notwithstanding these declarations, there was forgiveness with God, that He might be feared, and who had declared that, when the wicked man turneth away from (that is, repenteth of) his wickedness, "his transgressions shall not be mentioned against him, but his soul shall live."

The Divine then pathetically, but briefly, conjured the malefactor not to complain that justice had overtaken him, but to employ, in prayers and tears and sincere repentance, the short space allowed him, lest a worse punishment should visit him in the eternal world. Should the prisoner, however, or any whom he was addressing, (for all were sinners in some degree or other,) put off the important work of repentance until the door of mercy was shut, "God would laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh."

The Reverend Divine then read the Liturgy and lessons of the day, as also the 51st and 130th Psalms, which contain some passages admirably adapted to awaken the culprit to a sense of his awful situation. The following, for instance: "If

thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who can stand ;” and, “ Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God\*.”

\* In the year 1786, lived a yeoman of the name of Joseph Cook, who, in addition to his farming business, carried on that of a baker, at Stepingly, in Bedfordshire. Notwithstanding that he had an amiable wife, and several children, he formed a connexion with a young woman, of considerable attractions, residing at Flitwick, (a neighbouring village,) of the name of Elizabeth White, by whom he had a child. The illicit connexion continued after this, and Miss White again became pregnant. On the 30th of November, in the year above named, being Ampthill Saint Andrew’s Fair, the young woman was spending her evening at a merry-making, Saint Andrew being the titular saint of the lace-makers, who abound in this part of the country. Cook called her out, and they went away together, and she was not heard of or seen until she was found in Flitwick Wood, with her throat cut, and bearing several other mortal wounds. As she was last seen with Cook, suspicion naturally fell upon him, and he was apprehended, but he strongly denied his guilt, declaring that, after he called her out of her sister’s house, they went to an inn, and drank together, and parted in a friendly manner. There being no direct proof, and the accused being a person of property, the magistrates were about to set him at large, when, mark the finger of Providence! in came a man, with a long sharp case knife in his hand, which he had just found among the leaves near the spot where the murder was committed. It was observed that the prisoner changed countenance for the moment, so that the magistrates were induced to send officers to his house, where they found a set of knives and forks, in every respect corresponding with that before the magistrates, *but one knife was missing*. This evidence, though circumstantial, was deemed sufficiently strong to warrant a committal, and the prisoner was sent to gaol, and, at the following Lent Assizes held at Bedford, was convicted. The convict, who was deemed the best made, and handsomest man in the county, denied his guilt, but, at length, a confession of it was drawn from him by a pious stratagem. A clergyman who attended him, and to whom he listened attentively, said to him, the day before his execution, “ Mr. Cook, I have read a great deal to you, and, as you can read well, oblige me in turn by reading the 51st Psalm.” The prisoner readily complied, and read on with a clear enunciation, till he came to the 14th verse, when he first stammered, then staggered, and at last let the book fall from his hands, exclaiming, “ O God, I am guilty—I am guilty.” This is a proof, were others wanting, that the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword.



The prisoner appeared to feel their force and applicability, and frequently lifted up his hands toward heaven. When the clergyman read that part of the service, where supplication is made to the Divine throne, "that the rest of our lives may be pure and holy," Corder's emotion was excessive, owing, no doubt, to its exciting the painful reflection that his very hours were already numbered—that, though he might be "sought for in the morning, he should not be."

The first lesson read was that appointed for the day, but, for the second, the reverend chaplain selected a portion of the 15th chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, which the Church of England, from admiration of its deep and affecting solemnity, has incorporated in the Burial service. When he read the 30th verse, "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour," the prisoner was much agitated, and wept and sighed deeply, as he did also at the commencement of the reading of the Litany; and, to the human eye, he appeared in heart, though not in words, to join in the supplication to the Trinity to have mercy upon miserable sinners. In that part of the Litany, where the Divine mercy and protection are besought on behalf of "all prisoners and captives," the chaplain added, "*and especially upon him who awaits the awful execution of the law.*" This unexpected addition to the usual supplication had a sensible effect on Corder, and, for the first time since he had been in the chapel, he raised his head, took his handkerchief from his face, and, with his left hand, struck his thigh with considerable force.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, the Reverend Gentleman addressed the Throne of grace in an extempore prayer on behalf of the prisoner, "imploping Him who had delivered Manasseh, when bound in

chains, and who, in his mercy, had pardoned the thief upon the cross, to have mercy upon the prisoner before them. It is true that he had not himself shown that mercy to his departed sister which he now implored for himself—he had, in an evil hour, broken the divine law, by shedding the blood of a fellow-creature; yet there was forgiveness with God, that He might be feared, and whose power was able to deliver the true penitent from blood-guiltiness, or from the punishment consequent upon a breach of the great commandment.”

By way of concluding this part of the service, the devout and weeping suppliant implored Almighty God to “enable so heinous a sinner as the prisoner to cast himself wholly upon the Redeemer, and that through His merits, passion, and death, he might be delivered from the pressure of his guilt, and thereby fitted for the kingdom of glory.” “O Lord, let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die.” The prisoner here could stifle his grief no longer, but mingled his tears with those of his spiritual guide, and, for the first time, uttered a response, by a loud whispered “Amen.”

---

#### THE CONDEMNED SERMON.

The most solemn and impressive part of the service being ended, the Reverend Chaplain proceeded to deliver what is termed the Condemned Sermon, selecting for the subject of his discourse part of St. Luke's Evangelical Account of the Crucifixion of our Redeemer, viz. Chapter xxii., Verse 41st., middle clause—“For we receive the due reward of our deeds.”



In his exordium to this short, but appropriate and impressive discourse, the Divine remarked upon the eventful history of which the text formed a part—a history in which the whole human race were concerned, for it was an account of the crucifixion and death of the Son of God, in order to procure the redemption and final salvation of mankind.

On this eventful occasion the persecutors of the Saviour, by way of derision and as a mark of ignominy, caused a malefactor to be placed on either side of the Redeemer. From the conduct of one of those thieves, it appeared (and it is too often the case now) that sin and guilt had a direct tendency to render the mind callous, and to cause the tongue to give utterance to profanation. “And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him (i. e. the Redeemer), saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.”

“But the other answering, rebuked him, saying Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?”

“And we, indeed, justly, *for we receive the due reward of our deeds*: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with me in paradise\*.”

Here was displayed the mercy and benign-

\* Much learned labour has been bestowed by writers of the Socinian persuasion, in reference to this passage, which some contend, is of an ambiguous meaning, if taken literally; while others among them deny that Christ had power to perform the promise made to the dying thief. The plain meaning of this encouraging declaration is, however, obvious to the serious and reflecting Christian, who believes in the divinity and atonement of Christ, and who acknowledges the sovereignty of God in nature, providence, and grace. The

nity of the Redeemer, who promised the dying culprit an entrance into his kingdom, because he believed in his Divine character as a Saviour. This salvation was attained in consequence of the words uttered in the text, accompanied as they were by faith, that He to whom they were addressed, had power to extend mercy.

After some further appropriate remarks, the preacher said he should take occasion to point out the state of mind which a malefactor appointed to die, ought to strive to attain, with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and when attained, how it should be manifested to others.

1st. He would briefly observe that the *external* demeanour of a person so unhappily circumstanced should be such as not to give offence—that he should watch his actions at the time of death; for if he should then act with unbecoming levity—if he should manifest impenitence, and, in despite of the upbraidings of conscience, deny his guilt, and the justice of his condemnation, the mischief he might then do would be irreparable, because, standing as he then would upon the brink of eternity, he could

The expiring thief, when on the brink of an eternal world, feeling his sin and misery, implores of Jesus Christ to be *remembered* by him in the way of mercy. The dying Saviour listened to his petition, and granted more than his request, by assuring the penitent, not only that he would remember him, but that, on his departure from this world, he should be with Him in a world of Glory.

It sometimes happens, that the semi-sceptic, and half-believer, when he condescends to refer to a future state, attempts to silence the unruly monitor within him, by exclaiming—"Nil desperandum, never despair! God is good, and Christ is merciful—the dying thief was saved in the last hour, and so may I be."

Logicians such as these would do well to reflect, that men who break the divine commands with impunity, have no right to presume on the mercy of God. "Sin not, that grace may abound."



never have an opportunity of repairing the injury by repentance. A criminal ought to endeavour to conduct himself at the close of his existence so as to edify and improve those by his death, who could only have received evil examples from his former life, conversation, and pursuits. A death on the scaffold always excited considerable attention on the part of the multitude of spectators who generally assembled to witness these awful scenes; and whatever was then said and done by the dying malefactor made a deep impression on their minds: it became, indeed, a matter of historical record; so that, if the deportment of the criminal was becoming, and his repentance sincere, he might, in his last moments, effect much positive good, as well as prevent much negative evil. Finally, a person so awfully situated, and about to be launched into eternity, should so demean himself as not to weaken or destroy the reverence and respect due to that God before whose awful tribunal "all must shortly appear to give an account of the deeds done in the body."

2d. Having made those few remarks upon what ought to be the external or outward behaviour of the criminal, he should proceed, in the second place, to point out what ought to be his *inward* demeanour, for that was of much more moment, inasmuch as, if that was proper, the other would be as a natural consequence. The prisoner, condemned to die, should endeavour to make his peace with, and obtain the pardon of God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. He should strive to possess that godly sorrow which worketh life and salvation, and to manifest his contrition by a repentance which needeth not to be repented of. As his life was nearly closing upon him, he could not expect to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, so as to make it manifest to the world; it was nevertheless incumbent upon him to pray, and not only to pray, but to

reiterate his prayers to the Great Being, who will not shut his ears to the cry of the prisoner in the dungeon, until he felt an internal satisfaction that mercy was awarded him. Repentance should be a matter of choice, and not considered as one of force. It often happened when men were cast upon a bed of sickness, or brought to experience any severe affliction, that they would manifest something like contrition. The debauchee would make his vows that, if his life should be spared, he would never more

“ Roll over his full bowl,  
And when 'twas drained,  
Fill up another to the brim  
And laugh at the poor bugbear Death.”

But, alas ! it too frequently happened that, when the boon of life was granted and its short span extended, the superficial penitent “ returned like a dog to his vomit, and as a sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire.” True repentance was a work of the heart ; a secret communication between God and the soul, which “ the stranger intermeddleth not with.”

The convicted criminal should take a review of his past life, and try to recall all the various mazes of sin and folly through which he had wandered, and then debase himself before God, and exclaim as the Psalmist did, in the words read in the early part of the service, “ Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.”

Moreover, a criminal should do that which is generally considered a difficult task ; he should acknowledge the justice of his sentence, and that the judgment of the Lord is right. Persons who have been convicted of crime have felt ashamed to acknowledge that they deserved an ignominious death ; but why should they do so ? The ignominy of this world soon terminates, so far as the individual is concerned. It is but of a short duration ; but the cal-



lous and the remorseless would afterwards have to go through a dreary passage, even through "the dark valley of the shadow of death," in order to have the righteous judgment of God unfolded to their astonished view. That judgment would at the last day be twofold—*absolution* to the repentant sinner, and *condemnation* to those who "hated instruction, and despised reproof." On that "great day for which all other days were made," when the Son of Man will come in all his glory, surrounded by his holy angels, "the King shall say unto those on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The latter will be banished from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; the other received into an eternal habitation in those regions where, at the right hand of God, streams of pleasure roll for ever.

Let the sinner only reflect while he has time to do so, "even now in this the day of his visitation, upon the things which make for his peace, before they are for ever hidden from his eyes." On that great and terrible morning what would he not give for a day—an hour even—to retrace his errors? But his doom would be fixed—it would be too late—and that irrevocable doom would be eternal torture.

[The prisoner shuddered convulsively several times during this appeal.]

"Depart, ye cursed;" what a terrible sound! To be forced to depart from that God in whom we lived, moved, and had our being; who had provided eternal life and salvation for us: from that Saviour who would "fain have gathered us as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and we would not"—how terrible! Such, however, must be the fate of the obstinate, impenitent, and unbelieving.

Who can reflect without shuddering upon that worm which never dies ; “ who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ? ” The dreadful punishment which will be actually inflicted upon the impenitent will be augmented tenfold by their being informed of the glories and joys from which they are banished, and in which, but for the enjoyment of the deceitful pleasures of sin for a season, they might have participated \*.

In conclusion, the Reverend Divine, by a general exhortation, besought his hearers to beware of self-deception. “ Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Beware, also, of pharisaical notions, and say not within yourselves, “ I thank God I am not as other men are even as this *murderer*.” Take warning by the impending and awful fate of the young man

\* The Reverend Divine dwelt forcibly upon this head, which we take the liberty of illustrating by quoting from the writings of a poet, as pious as she was fair, part of a dialogue between the damned Spirit of a once hopeful young man and Satan :—

“ FALLEN SPIRIT. (*In agony.*)

And will my griefs no happy period find ?

“ DEVIL. (*Sneering.*)

Count all the twinkling glories of the sky ;  
 Count all the drops that in the ocean lie ;  
 Of the whole earthly globe the atoms count ;  
 Eternal years thy numbers still surmount.  
 As fix'd, as permanent, thy bliss had been  
 But for one darling, one beloved sin.  
 Poor sottish soul, beneath our envy now,  
 For what a toy didst thou a heaven forego ?

“ FALLEN SPIRIT.

Alas ! what have I lost !

“ DEVIL. (*With a malicious grin.*)

Thou know'st not what thou'st lost, but we too well  
 The glories of that happy place can tell.  
 There bliss immortal in full torrents roll ;  
 For pleasure's formed this loss must rack thy soul.”

Mrs. ELIZ. ROWE



before you, and let his death prove your conversion and salvation. Beware that you continue not in sin, lest the same judgment come upon you here, and eternal wrath hereafter. And let me impress upon your minds that the laws of the land only have respect to the outward actions of men; but the divine law takes cognizance of the inward workings and thoughts of the heart, which are ever visible to that Omniscient Being who "is about our bed and about our path, and spyeth out all our ways;" Him from whom no secrets are hid, and from whose presence we can never conceal ourselves.

At the close of this impressive discourse the preacher again implored the Divine blessing on behalf of him who was the peculiar object of his solicitude, and also on the prisoners generally; and thus terminated a solemn service, which we believe produced a considerable alteration in the mind of the guilty man.

The sermon, of which we have given only a sketch, being concluded Corder was led by Mr. Orridge from his pew to his cell. He had occasionally evinced great mental anguish, and at times his emotions were truly distressing. As soon as he had reached his cell, which was within ten yards of the chapel, he threw himself upon the bed and sobbed convulsively for many minutes. The cast of his countenance had undergone a very material change since the first day of the trial; his cheeks were considerably collapsed, and his eyes appeared much swollen as if from weeping—indeed, he looked like a ghastly image of despair.

---

## Mrs. CORDER'S LAST VISIT.

After Corder left the chapel in the morning, he threw himself on his couch immediately on entering his cell, as we have before said, and for some time paid no attention to any one, but seemed engaged in mental prayer. After a short interval, however, he arose, and joined freely in conversation with the Rev. Mr. Stocking and the governor; and appeared to derive consolation from the encouragements held out in the gospel to the vilest of sinners. His conduct was docile, and such as became a person who knew he had but a few hours to live\*. There

\* During the time of Corder's confinement, a number of reports were in circulation, which tended, no doubt, to prejudice the mind of the superficial against him, but which had no foundation in fact. And we feel ourselves bound, in justice to the wretched convict, to rescue his character from unmerited opprobrium, there being quite sufficient to render him an object of detestation. It was said, that during his confinement his conduct was not only frivolous, but his language often obscene and blasphemous; and in addition it was rumoured that, in league with other prisoners, he had laid a plan to escape from the gaol, and thereby thwart the ends of justice: even within a few days preceding his trial, it was circulated throughout the village of Polstead, that in consequence of his having struck one of his fellow-prisoners, he was taken out of the yard and confined in the "black hole."

Upon making inquiry, we found that the above reports were gross fabrications, framed, no doubt, to gratify the cravings of the credulous, or perhaps to excite prejudice. That Corder often appeared very unconcerned relative to his fate, and manifested a cheerfulness of mind which seemed incompatible with guilt, is admitted; but his conduct, both toward the governor, his officers, and his fellow-prisoners was, generally speaking, not only decorous and blameless, but in some instances, praiseworthy. He devoted considerable time in the course of the day to reading, and we understand that he addressed the Throne of grace night and morning. In one of his conversations with Mr. Stocking, he admitted that he had read Paine's works and other books of a similar description; but it by no means appeared that he had imbibed their notions: in fact, Corder appears to have glided over the surface of things, and was a man of no fixed principles. It is quite clear, however, from his letters written



was one thing, however, connected with this world, of which he could not divest his mind, namely, the anticipation of once more beholding his amiable but unhappy wife, it having been hinted to him, that in all probability she would be admitted to a short interview in the afternoon, to take her last farewell. In the afternoon, the unfortunate woman came, and considering the heavy weight of affliction under which she was labouring, her fortitude and resignation astonished every one. Of course this solemn interview affected her much, but her emotions were not more acute than those of the wretched man, between whom and her a final separation was about to take place under circumstances the most awful. To be severed from those we love is exceedingly distressing under ordinary circumstances of dissolution; but who can tell the writhings of the heart when the thread of connubial joys and attachments is severed by the hand of the public executioner!

In the midst of all the mournful considerations which occupied the mind of Mrs. Corder, she manifested that one only was paramount to all the rest, namely, the eternal salvation of her husband's soul.

Her "heart's desire and prayer to God was that he might be saved." How pathetically did she (when sobs did not prevent utterance) entreat him to be earnest in his applications for mercy—and reiterated what she had often said and written

while in prison, that he had read and studied the Bible and the works of some of our sublime poets, and that whatever his practice had been, he had once entertained orthodox notions of the way of salvation.

Amongst other idle rumours, one was, that he had preached to a congregation at Polstead and other places. This carries a contradiction on the face of it, for every one who knew him was well acquainted with his reservedness; and moreover, he never laid claim to any kind of theological knowledge.

to him, that her only desire on earth was to live to witness that, although he had lived a great sinner, he died a sincere penitent. Corder felt the force of her observations, and pledged himself to profit, even in his dying hour, by her kind and unaffected exhortations.

The time of parting for ever, at length, arrived; but who can describe the scene? Not the most accomplished and pathetic writer, nor the most expert and sentimental artist\*.

The unhappy lady having bestowed her last benediction, and her last caress, was supported, in her exit from the gloomy apartment, which was destined to be the porch which would lead her guilty husband to an eternal world †.

\* I was once present in Bedford Gaol, when a convict of the name of Merrill, once a respectable yeoman in that County, but afterwards a noted burglar, was visited by his wife and six children, on the day previous to his execution. The eldest was a daughter about seventeen years of age, and the youngest an infant at the breast. When it was announced to the mournful visitors that they must leave the cell, the scene was truly heart-rending. The convict stood holding up his massy chains in one hand, while the other arm embraced his disconsolate wife, whose hand was eagerly pressed by two little boys about the age of eight and ten years, and another knelt at the feet of his dying father, and embraced his legs.

Thus surrounded, the muscular Merrill stood statue-like, unable either to shed a tear or soothe the sorrows of the wretched group. There was one thing which affected me more than all the rest; and that was, when a bystander, who held the infant, put it to his father to receive his parting kiss. The little innocent, unconscious of her father's fate, or her mother's wretchedness gave a smile of recognition in the face of her guilty parent, and played with the ringlets which hung upon his manly forehead:—this was too much, the flood-gates of nature opened, and the child was literally drenched with her father's tears. During this time, the wretched wife and her other children were forcibly torn from the cell, and thus terminated a scene of heart-rending which will never be obliterated from my recollection.—ED.

† The following beautiful lines were written in pencil on the



In the course of the conversation which took place between the miserable couple, Corder adverted to the circumstance of their marriage, and we were informed that he advised her not to marry again, or, at least, if she did, not to marry under circumstances similar to those which introduced her to him\*.

Corder had often been heard to eulogize her for her excellent qualities, and to observe, that she would render any man happy whoever married her.

wall, by an accomplished young man, during his confinement in the cells of Newgate, under sentence of death, for a forgery upon the Gravesend Bank, and for which he was executed. We consider that it will not be inapplicable to insert them:—

Thou hapless wretch, whom justice calls  
To dwell within these dreary walls—  
Know, guilty man, this very cell  
May be to thee the porch to hell.  
Thy guilt confess'd—thy sins forgiven—  
Mysterious change—it leads to heaven!"—*John Vartie.*

That Corder sometimes carried his reflections beyond the present scene, is quite evident from his having embodied the following quotation from Milton, in one of his letters addressed to his mother, wherein he dwells upon eternity and everlasting punishment:—

"The dismal situation, waste and wild,  
A dungeon horrible; on all sides round,  
As one great furnace flam'd, yet from those flames  
No light; but rather darkness visible  
Served only to discover sights of woe,—  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes  
That comes to all".——— *Paradise Lost.*

\* Corder here adverted to the Advertisement which he inserted in the *Sunday Times*. In the course of conversation, a gentleman, who was sceptical as to whether Corder had received as many answers as he had stated, delicately put the question to Mrs. Corder, who, we understand, said, that she had seen forty-five letters. The Advertisement, together with the answers, will be given in a future part of this History.

He should have added, “ unless an over-burdened conscience rendered him incapable of enjoying happiness.’

After Mrs. Corder had remained a short time in the turnkey’s lodge, she returned to her residence, in College-Street, in a gig, accompanied by her friend, Mrs. Atherton \*.

---

### CORDER’S LAST NIGHT.

As might be naturally supposed, Corder was very much oppressed in mind, after being for ever separated from the being in whom his earthly affections appeared to centre ; but in a short time he was visited by the Reverend Chaplain, whose

\* It may not be improper to observe, that Mr. Orridge was literally teased with unceasing applications of persons for permission to see the prisoner, some under pretext of desiring to administer religious consolation, and some, perhaps, actuated only by motives of curiosity.

One of the most earnest applications was from a Mr. Moore, (a dissenting minister, living, we believe, at Boxford,) at whose place of worship Corder attended, during the time he paid his addresses to a young woman, who was a member of that gentleman’s congregation. From his intense anxiety to obtain admission, Mr. Orridge wished to ascertain whether Corder was desirous of seeing the reverend gentleman, and he, therefore, communicated to him the nature of the application.

The prisoner, upon hearing it, expressed a decided repugnance to his visit, and accompanied his refusal to see him with this observation :—“ I am anxious, Mr. Orridge, to have my mind undisturbed during the short time I have to be in this world. I am perfectly contented with the religious instructions and consolations administered to me by Mr. Stocking. To see strange faces, or even to receive the visits of those I know, would only unnerve me, and divert my attention from that calm reflection which, in my melancholy and awful situation, is so very essential.”



attentions to the dying man were as exemplary as they were unwearied. The poignancy of his feelings gradually subsided, and he joined in conversation with comparative cheerfulness, and at other times listened attentively to the advice and instructions which were given to him\*. He was exhorted to remember that “He that *confesseth* and forsaketh his sins, should find mercy.”—The Lamb of God was pointed out as the great vicarious sacrifice, by whose blood his iniquities could be purged. Corder frequently complained of the hardness of his heart, and at times appeared to doubt whether so guilty a sinner could obtain mercy. He was told, that the goodness of God was infinite and boundless, and that the only safe way for an overburdened sinner, was to throw himself at the footstool of divine grace, and if he perished, to perish there.

When Mr. Stocking left him in the evening, the mind of the convict appeared to be almost entirely abstracted from the world, but he requested that his spiritual guide would attend him early on the following morning. During this interview, the Reverend Gentleman, in general terms, urged him to confess all his sins, and if he could make any reparation to those whose character he had injured, to do so immediately.—“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.” Although the Reverend Gentleman did not press him, in plain terms, to acknowledge his guilt, yet there

\* It has very often been observed, by those who visited prisons, that, after the final interview between criminals and their relations, their minds become more susceptible of religious impressions than they had been previously. Many have described the separation to be more painful than the dread of their awful destiny—indeed, when this is over, it may be observed that, in a physical sense, “the bitterness of death is past.”

is no doubt that his exhortations had the effect of preparing his mind to make the statement which, in the course of the evening, was elicited from him.

---

### CONFESSION.

About nine o'clock in the evening, Mr. Orridge sent the prisoner the following paper, upon the subject of CONFESSION, accompanied by a request that he would read it attentively, and also an intimation that he (Mr. Orridge) would visit, and spend some time with him at a later part of the evening\*.

“Confession to the world has always been held a necessary atonement where the party has committed offences affecting the interests of *society at large*.

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth, shall have mercy.

“Surely confession to *God* cannot be here meant, as no man can hope to *hide* his sins from *God*. Confess your faults *one to another*, and pray one for another. JAMES v. 16.

\* In the early part of the morning, Mr. Pryke, bailiff to Mrs. Corder, called at the prison, with a message from the poor distressed mother, who requested to know, whether her wretched son had a particular wish to see her once more before he died, because, if he had, notwithstanding the distance, and her severe bodily and mental affliction, she would come to Bury. Corder, with tears, expressed his gratitude for his mother's attention to him in his last stage of degradation, but observed, that as the interview would be painful to both parties, and perhaps fatal to her, he would rather decline it. He sent his dying love to his unhappy parent, and begged that she would pray that God would have mercy upon him.

The Reverend Mr. Sheen, the Sheriff's Chaplain, visited the prisoner in the evening, and remained with him half an hour.



“Archbishop Tillotson says, ‘In case our sins have been public and scandalous, both reason and the practice of the Christian Church do require that when men have publicly offended, they should give public satisfaction and *open testimony* of their repentance.’ The text in James is a direct *command*.

“The Christian Doctrine of the necessity of restitution is strong, and if you will not confess, how can you make restitution to the *reputation of your victim*?—You have accused her of having murdered herself. If you die without denying that accusation, how do you obey the command, ‘to do that to another, which we would have another do to us?’

“The doctrine of confession which is objectionable in a popish point of view, is the private confession to a priest of private vices; but the duty of making acknowledgment of public crimes can have nothing to do with such objections. Even supposing it doubtful, whether a man is bound, after offending society, to confess his errors to the world, there can be no doubt that he will *not do* anything wrong by confessing. One course is therefore *certain*, the other uncertain. Can a man hesitate to seize the former?”

“JOHN ORRIDGE.”

According to his promise, Mr. Orridge waited upon him, and inquired whether he had read the above paper; he said he had. They then entered into conversation upon the subject of it; after which Corder expressed his readiness to perform the duty which it inculcated, and Mr. Orridge took a pen and wrote the following *Confession*, which he read over attentively, and the prisoner then signed it with a firm hand.

---

## VERBATIM COPY OF THE CONFESSION.

Bury Gaol, Aug. 10, 1828, Condemned Cell  
Sunday Evening, half-past 11.

*"I acknowledge being guilty of the death of poor Maria Marten, by shooting her with a pistol. The particulars are as follows:—When we left her father's house we began quarrelling about the burial of the child, she apprehending that the place wherein it was deposited would be found out. The quarrel continued for about three-quarters of an hour, upon this and other subjects. A scuffle ensued, and during the scuffle, and at the time I think she had hold of me, I took the pistol from the side-pocket of my velveteen jacket, and fired. She fell, and died in an instant. I never saw even a struggle. I was overwhelmed with agitation and dismay—the body fell near the front doors on the floor of the barn. A vast quantity of blood issued from the wound, and ran on to the floor and through the crevices. Having determined to bury the body in the barn (about two hours after she was dead) I went and borrowed the spade of Mrs. Stow; but before I went there, I dragged the body from the barn into the chaff-house, and locked up the barn. I returned again to the barn and began to dig the hole; but the spade being a bad one, and the earth firm and hard, I was obliged to go home for a pickaxe and a better spade, with which I dug the hole, and then buried the body. I think I dragged the body by the handkerchief that was tied round her neck—it was dark when I finished covering up the body. I went the next day, and washed the blood from off the barn floor. I declare to Almighty God I had no sharp instrument about me, and that no other wound but the one made by the pistol was inflicted by me. I have been guilty of*



*great idleness, and at times led a dissolute life, but I hope through the mercy of God to be forgiven.*

*“W. CORDER.”*

*Witness to the signing by the said William Corder,*

**JOHN ORRIDGE.**

Sunday Evening, half-past 12 o'clock.

Condemned Cell, 12 o'clock Monday Morning, Aug. 11, 1828.

*The above Confession was read over carefully to the prisoner in our presence, who stated most solemnly it was true; and that he had nothing to add to or retract from it.*

*W. STOCKING, Chaplain.*

*TIMOTHY R. HOLMES, Under-Sheriff\*.*

After the above confession had been signed, and a little before the prisoner went out to be executed, the question was again put, whether, on the day of the murder, he had a sharp instrument with him? He firmly denied it in the presence of Dr. Probert, and the under-sheriff;—the prisoner, however, gave it as his opinion, that the pistol-ball with which he killed his victim had entered the right eye.

Mr. Orridge remained with the prisoner until an hour after midnight, and when he left him he appeared to be relieved from a heavy burden, in consequence of the acknowledgment which he had made to the governor. When left with his companions for the last night, he discoursed with them upon several subjects, but his conversation had a reference to his awful guilt, and just condemnation. He also made allusions to the place of his nativity,

\* The prisoner afterwards acknowledged that he committed the forgery upon the bank of Messrs. Alexander and Co., but he had been assured that his wife had paid the amount of the forged cueque, which it will be recollected was £93.

and spoke in affectionate terms of his mother and relations; and there is no doubt that, when he carried his thoughts to the village of Polstead, he reflected upon the days of his childhood, and was feelingly alive to the truth of the following declarations, which we repeat in his own words:—  
 “I have brought guilt and shame upon myself, and unspeakable misery upon my relations and connexions: whereas, if I had walked in the paths of virtue, I might, with the property and advantages which I possessed, have been as respectable as any young man in the county of Suffolk\*.”

\* The following beautiful lines appear to us so descriptive of the feelings of Corder at this awful hour of “midnight musing,” that we cannot refrain from inserting them: they moreover point out in striking language the medium through which even a murderer may obtain mercy and salvation—indeed, the applicability of the whole passage to our “history” is such as almost to induce a belief that they were written with a prophetic reference to “the Polstead murder.”

“But when the erring heart at Passion’s shrine  
 Hath basely sacrificed each trait divine,  
 When guilt hath stain’d it with the deepest dye,  
 And *blood for blood* is nature’s dreadful cry,  
 Angel of mercy! thy supernal power  
 Alone can tame the terrors of the hour.  
 Thine is the charm that bids the heart unbind,  
 Mount on the wings of Faith, and leave Despair behind;  
 Thine is the voice that soothes the dying breath,  
 And breathes a *halo round* the brow of death.  
 And hark, the midnight bars have ceased to sound;  
 The dungeon guard has paced his clanking round;  
 And all is dark and dismal as the deep  
 When weary storms sink mutt’ring into sleep.  
 But one there is in yonder glimmering cell,  
 Whose young heart wept, and wondered while it fell.  
 A wreck of crime, upon his stony bed,  
 With eye wild-rolling, and bewildered head,  
 ’Tis not the chain that clinks upon the straw,  
 ’Tis not the blow of violated law,  
 But racking thoughts that rive his shudd’ring heart.  
 And makes the fibres of his bosom start!  
 Yes! they have borne him to the *Polstead* streams  
 Where young-eyed Fancy wove her fairy dreams;



MORNING OF EXECUTION.—GREAT INFLUX  
OF STRANGERS, AND STATE OF BURY  
ST. EDMUND'S.

On the night previous to the execution, several persons who had not been present at the Assizes arrived at Bury, for the purpose of being present at the moment when Corder was to expiate his offence by the forfeiture of his life, influenced, no doubt, by the belief that the culprit would make some extraordinary declarations relative to his mysterious life; or, perhaps, in the expectation that he would make an ample confession of his guilt. This being Sunday, there was a great number of

To each green glade where boyhood loved to roam,  
Till twilight came and called the truant home.  
And where is she who rocked him to repose,  
And sang and smiled to lull his infant woes?  
And he who greeted with paternal joy  
The dawning virtues of his darling boy?  
*The sire afar, beneath the sod does sleep,*  
*The mother lives to sigh, and mourn, and weep!—*  
That working eye, and palpitating cheek,  
Those wringing hands, and that delirious shriek,  
Oh! these betray the burning load of pain  
*Remembrance* piles upon his phrensied brain!  
Till Faith descend upon her wings of love,  
Raise the droop'd soul, and point to realms above.  
Then firm his glance, hushed every groan and cry,  
And Hypocrites might shake to view a felon die!"

MONTGOMERY'S *Omnipresence of the Deity.*

The compiler of this work has taken the liberty of deviating in two instances from the original, in order to render the quotation completely applicable in all its parts.

The words of the sublime author are

"Yes! they have borne him to *his native streams.*"

He has also substituted the two lines marked in *italics*, for the following:—

"Afar, beneath the trampled sod they sleep,  
He neither heard them sigh, nor heard them weep."

persons hovering about the front of the gaol, or parading about it, in order to catch a glance of the spot where Corder was to die.

As early as five o'clock on Monday morning, hundreds of rustics poured into the town from different parts of the county; and by six, chaises, gigs, and vehicles of every description, some of which conveyed ten or twelve passengers, lined the several streets, until at length every stable and yard was full, as were also the inns and public-houses, so that adequate accommodation could not be afforded either to man or beast, and hundreds who had not been provident enough to bring food with them, were obliged to go to the place of execution in a fasting condition. The visitors consisted of almost every grade in society; but there were more labouring men than any other class: for although it was a fine harvest-day, the reapers, &c. for miles round, "struck," and came in gangs to witness the end of the murderer. The reason why they came so early, in all probability was in consequence of a rumour having been circulated, that the execution would take place at nine o'clock.

Among the concourse of visitors, were an extraordinary number from the vicinity of Polstead, who started from their respective places of abode at midnight. Boxford alone was said to supply near two hundred persons, and many came from places more distant than Norwich, Newmarket, or Cambridge.

Before seven o'clock a number of persons had taken their places in the paddock; but as the workmen were erecting the gallows and platforms, and also putting down the barriers, the crowd was removed by the constables, and the gate locked. The people did not seem to resent this ejectment, because Mr. Orridge signified, that as soon as the workmen



had completed their preparations, the gates should be re-opened, and this promise was performed between nine and ten o'clock, when the people rushed in by thousands, every one being anxious to get a standing-place near the scaffold.

Long before the hour arrived, every foot of ground was occupied in the spacious pasture, and the buildings and trees which stood within view of the scene of death had their occupants. Various were the conjectures as to the number of persons congregated; but if we were to form our judgment upon a geographical calculation, we should say, that the field alone contained from eight to nine thousand persons, exclusive of those who possessed more elevated situations.

It is due to the peasantry to observe, that although they had to continue for hours closely wedged together, nothing could form a greater contrast than their conduct, when compared with the London rabble, who congregate in the Metropolis on such melancholy occasions. It was owing, perhaps, to this decency of conduct throughout the day, that no accident occurred of any consequence. In that part of the paddock near the road, grow a number of beautiful firs, and other evergreens. Mr. Orridge requested as a favour, that the spectators would not injure them, and, owing to the universal respect which the public entertain for that gentleman, his request was strictly attended to.

---

#### DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES AT THE CHAPEL.

The prisoner was visited at an early hour in the morning by the Reverend Mr. Stocking, who continued with him a considerable time in the exercise

of private devotion, in order, no doubt, to prepare him for the participation of the Sacrament, and to fortify his mind to meet the dreadful change he was so soon to undergo.

After having partaken of a slight refreshment which was placed before him, he changed his prison dress for the same apparel which he wore on the day of his trial. His mind did not appear to be ruffled in any extraordinary degree, nor could it be said to be altogether calm or composed,—but he was feelingly alive to his situation; and so far from repining at the fate to which he was doomed, he acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and prayed with great earnestness for forgiveness.

At half-past nine o'clock he was conducted from his cell to the Chapel, which he entered with a firm step, and took his seat in the same pew, for the last time, which he had occupied on former occasions. We never beheld him more composed in the sanctuary than on this occasion, and he did not conceal his face in his hands, so constantly as he had previously done,—indeed, he manifested a befitting, and not unmanly, sense of the awful situation in which he was placed.

The Rev. Chaplain commenced the solemn service, by reading part of the ritual used at the burial of the dead.—In one part of his invocation, the preacher said, in allusion to Corder, “Deal not with him as he dealt with his sister, when she cried and he regarded her not!”—This affected the prisoner deeply, so that he raised his left hand and struck it violently on his knee, and gave a convulsive shudder.—During the other part of the service, he did not betray any extraordinary emotion, but listened attentively to the prayers and exhortations.

The Rev. Chaplain read portions from that beautiful petition to heaven, which was penned by a convicted divine, and used by him on the night



previous to his execution, and is called Dr. Dodd's last prayer\*.

The following appropriate prayer, selected from Russell's "Prisoner's Directory," formed part of the devotional exercise:

"Vouchsafe, O Thou God of all mercy and compassion, to look with pity upon the most deplorable case, and the woful condition of a poor wretch, ready by the sword of justice to be cut off, as not worthy to live any longer amongst men, and likely also without Thy speedy favour to be shut out of heaven, and to have part of the second death. True it is, O Lord, that all this, though it be grievous, is no more than his desert; and though he is adjudged to this, he confesses that it is through Thy mercy and goodness towards him, that he has been stopped by the power of magisterial authority from going on in further evil.

"He beseeches thee that his death may not only be a chastisement to him, but operate as a caution to others to obey the laws of nature and religion. But concerning his soul, which is now ere long to appear before the tribunal of Thy great and dread majesty, O Thou, who art the God and Father of heaven and earth, the mighty Creator and Lord of angels and of men, and who hast the keys of death and hell, we humbly beseech and earnestly pray Thee, to be merciful unto him. He acknowledges before Thee, that if due recompense and reward is given, he must needs be thrust into that dreadful place of infi-

\* This unfortunate gentleman, it will be remembered, was executed at Tyburn, on the 27th of June, 1777, for a forgery committed by him upon Lord Chesterfield, to whose son he was preceptor: he was also one of the Chaplains in Ordinary to his late Majesty. Such was the estimation in which this ill-fated divine was held, that, independently of the prayer of several public bodies, upwards of ten thousand persons petitioned the Throne for a commutation of his sentence, but the law was suffered to take its course.—For a detailed account of his life, trial, and execution, vide *Kelly's Newgate Calendar*, vol. ii. p. 502.

nite and eternal torment which Thou hast prepared for the wicked : neither does he see in himself or any other creature, any means or possibility of escape. Fearful to him has been the fate of an earthly judge, and the passing of the sentence of death, to be inflicted on his mortal body, hath made his heart to quake within him ; what, he is anxious to know, will become of him when arraigned before Thee in whom no man living, not the most righteous person, can be justified ? Thou, O Lord, knowest all his iniquities, which are registered in the book of Thy remembrance ; oftentimes has he sought to conceal his wickedness, vainly imagining that no eye could discover him ; yet nevertheless didst Thou compass all his paths, and become acquainted with all his ways, so that there hath not been a word of his mouth, or a thought of his heart, but Thou didst wholly comprehend it. Often has he said in his heart, ‘ God will not regard me.’—He hated knowledge, refused Thy counsel, and despised Thy gracious reproofs, and hardened his heart against Thee and all good advice, and moreover, silenced those checks of conscience which warned him. He confesses before Thee, that when admonished by his friends, he would have none of their reproof ; justly therefore, O Lord, hast Thou overtaken him, and made him to eat the fruit of his own ways ; and Thou art about to make him a spectacle to the world : yet as there is mercy with Thee, he beseeches Thy favour notwithstanding his unworthiness. Manasseh being bound in chains, prayed unto Thee, and Thou heardest him.—The thief at his execution on the cross, confessed his sin of murder, and prayed, as the unworthy creature before Thee, that he might be remembered by Thee, and Thou grantedst him an entrance into Thy kingdom.

“ Make him, O Lord, to see the depth and heinousness of his sins, and especially that sin



which now cries so loudly to Thee for vengeance against him, so that he may not, in this critical juncture—the last hour which is allowed him to work out his salvation, deceive his soul by attempting to diminish the number or weight of his crimes. May he acknowledge his sins before those who shall see his end and witness his death, in order that they may have some evidence of his repentance; so that they may thereby learn, by his example and punishment, to beware of the deceitfulness of sin, and also of fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

“ Strengthen him against the fear of death, although he has great cause to tremble, on account of the foulness of his offence. Deliver him, O Lord, from blood-guiltiness, and let not the innocent blood shed by his hand cry louder for vengeance than his sorrowful soul does for pardon and forgiveness.

“ He humbly prays Thee, finally, not to cast him off, who hath no hope, but only in Thee, and that alone in, to, and by Jesus Christ our only Lord and Redeemer. Amen, Amen.”

The Rev. Gentleman then read several appropriate passages of Holy Writ, and concluded by a fervent address to the Throne of Grace, for the salvation of the weeping criminal before him—that the sorrowful sighings of the prisoner appointed to die in a few hours, might ascend to God as an acceptable sacrifice.

At the conclusion of the service, Corder left the chapel with an unsteady or rather a limping step, and was reconducted to his cell, accompanied by the worthy Chaplain, who was about to assist him in his last act of private devotion.

Such was the impressive manner in which the service was conducted at the chapel, that the greatest seriousness prevailed; and we were gratified to see tears bedew the cheeks of one of the felons, whom, on a previous occasion, we observed act with great levity.

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT.

When the prisoner left the chapel, there intervened little more than an hour before that in which he was appointed to die, and it had been arranged, that, during that interval, he should partake of the Holy Sacrament.

During the time the Communion service was read, the prisoner frequently joined in it with a faltering voice ; but he seemed to appreciate, and was duly impressed with the importance of the solemn rite, the spiritual nature and intent of which had been previously and frequently explained to him by the pious gentleman who administered the sacred emblems. At the conclusion of this truly impressive service, Corder appeared to be very much refreshed. It is impossible for us to state, whether his mind was racked by the consideration of the violent and shameful death he was about to suffer, but he made no allusion to it on this occasion, nor did he utter the language of complaint.\*

The following is a passage from a Sermon which was read to Corder on the morning of execution, and which affected him very much.

“To die, to disappear from the earth, to enter the dark abyss of eternity, and go we know not whither ;—to become a carcase, and the food of worms, the horror of men, the hideous inmate of a tomb†—this dreadful idea is revolting to reason ;

\* After his condemnation, he frequently alluded to his fatal end, and more than once expressed his repugnance at the idea of being anatomized. It will be seen, however, by a letter written by the Surgeon of the Hospital, that the entire skeleton of the malefactor will be preserved, and find a place in a niche of the Theatre of Anatomy, at Bury St. Edmund's, for the occasional inspection of visitors.

† Corder said that this part of the passage was not applicable to his case.



imagination recoils from it, and cheerfulness sinks into melancholy. We dare not fix our thoughts upon so hideous an image, and we dread and fly from everything that might intrude its remembrance upon us, as if, at the same time, it could accelerate its approach."

---

### CORDER'S LAST LETTER TO HIS WIFE.

Shortly before the period arrived when he was to be taken out to suffer, the prisoner signified his wish to write a few lines to his hapless and broken-hearted wife—his request was granted. He then sat down, and wrote the following with a tolerably steady hand:—

"My life's loved Companion,—I am now going to the scaffold, and I have a lively hope of obtaining mercy and pardon for my numerous offences. May Heaven bless and protect you throughout this transitory vale of misery, and when we meet again, may it be in the regions of bliss! Adieu, my love, for ever adieu! In less than an hour I hope to be in Heaven. My last prayer is, that God will endue you with patience, fortitude, and resignation to his Divine will—rest assured that his wise providence will work all things together for your good.

"The awful sentence which has been passed upon me, and which I am now summoned to answer, I confess is very just, and I die in peace with all mankind. I feel truly grateful for the kindnesses I have received from Mr. Orridge, and for the religious instruction and consolation I have received from the Reverend Mr. Stocking, who has promised to take my last words to you.

"Adieu.—W. C."

The above letter was then handed to the Reverend Chaplain, together with two books, which the prisoner requested that gentleman to deliver to







EXECUTION OF WILLIAM GORDON, AT BURY, AUGUST 11. 1828.



Mrs. Corder, as soon as convenient after his execution.

The Chaplain promised to comply with this request, and he fulfilled his promise in the course of the day.

---

### THE EXECUTION.

We have at length arrived at the concluding act of this dreadful tragedy. "Blood for blood" is the cry of nature, as well as the demand of divine legislation, and also of the laws of all civilized communities, and these requirements are about to be obeyed; the blood of the criminal is now to be shed, in order to expiate the foul offence of which he had been guilty.

At half past eleven o'clock, T. R. Holmes, Esq., the Under Sheriff, announced to the prisoner, through Mr. Orridge, that the time had arrived when he must resign himself to the officers of justice, and submit to the usual preparation for execution! \* Awful annunciation! Although Corder was well aware of the precise time fixed for his exit from this world, (and he could see the minutes glide away by the prison dial which was within his view,) he appeared to start when the announcement was made; but he soon recovered himself, and earnestly called upon God for mercy. He then took the arm of one of his attendants, and descended to a room immediately under his cell, where his arms were pinioned, and his wrists tied by the executioner who officiates at the metropolitan prison of Newgate†. During the time of these awful and

\* It is not customary here, as in London, for the High Sheriff to attend at the execution of criminals.

† Such was the certainty which the local authorities entertained of a conviction, that they sent "a retaining fee" to the



preliminary preparations, the Reverend Chaplain whispered some consolatory words in his ear, when Corder falteringly exclaimed several times, "May God forgive me!" "O Lord, receive my guilty soul!" His handkerchief was then taken from his neck, and put into his bosom, the executioner, at the same time, inquiring whether he would like to have it bound over his eyes at the place of execution. To this, Corder made no reply. Every thing being ready, several sheriffs' officers attended, with their wands, to conduct the criminal to the platform, but, before they did so, his dying, and, we must say, laudable request was complied with. He was taken round to the different wards of the prison, at the gates of which the inmates were assembled, all of whom he shook by the hand. It is quite clear that Corder, at this time, was in full possession of his faculties, because he gave a very significant shake of the hand to some prisoners who had known him from his childhood. He, in particular, singled out one of these of the name of Nunn, and, on taking his hand, shook it with more fervour than he manifested in regard to the others, and said to him, "Nunn, may God Almighty bless you\*!"

The unfortunate felons whom he addressed appeared to be much affected while he was bidding them farewell, and we hope that the impression will never be obliterated from their minds.

After he had gone round to the entrance of the several wards of the gaol, which are ranged round the Governor's house, he proceeded to the debtors' yard, when three of the inmates came to the grating,

finisher of the law; and, in order to insure his important services, ordered him to proceed to Bury forthwith, and he actually started with a double set of *furniture* [ropes], as Jack calls them, before the prisoner was put upon his trial, and arrived at the place of destination twenty hours before it terminated.

\* This was the man, to whom he frequently said before trial, "That sword will go near to hang me."

and cordially shook him by the hand. After he had performed this duty, which Mr. Orridge thought was calculated to prove beneficial to the juvenile offenders in particular, the procession was formed in the usual manner, in order to advance toward the scaffold. The Under Sheriff and the Governor took the lead, and Mr. Stocking followed next, reading, with great solemnity, part of the burial service. Corder was sometimes at the side, and sometimes in the rear of the clergyman. His walk was not firm, neither could it be termed very unsteady, excepting when he once made a trip against a pebble. He was dressed exactly the same as on the days of trial, with the exception of his having substituted a pair of speckled worsted stockings for the silk and cotton ones. On the procession reaching the steps which led to the platform, it halted for a minute, when Mr. Stocking, to whom the prisoner again made his grateful acknowledgments, read the following passage: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." The officers and reporters having taken their places within the railing, and the executioner standing ready with the rope and cap in his hand, the prisoner was immediately conducted, by Mr. Orridge, to that fatal plank, from whence he was to be launched into an eternal world.

The prospect from the place where the wretched criminal stood, is of the most beautiful description. The foreground consists of softly-swelling or gently rising hills, which are bounded in the distance by extensive plantations of evergreens, so that they form a sort of picturesque amphitheatre round the prison. But to his view, upon whom the eyes of thousands were fixed, this lovely scene of romantic beauty had no charms; and almost as soon as he glanced upon it, it was shut from his sight for ever.



When the prisoner first made his appearance on the scaffold, there was a momentary buzz in the crowd, and all the men took off their hats. Although the majority of spectators consisted of male, there were a great number of females present, some of rank, and dressed in the first style of fashion \*. Two women of the inferior class must have entered the field very early, as they had advanced to the barrier immediately under the gallows. Independently of the crowd congregated in the field near to the platform, and the buildings being crowded by daring clamberers, a number of equestrians and pedestrians were seen on the eminences in the background, who were excited by curiosity to witness, even at a distance, the end of a man, whose life and character had been the principal topic of conversation for several months.

The apparatus for the execution was exceedingly simple, and much smaller than the ponderous machine used at Newgate. Instead of being straight, the cross-beam is a kind of slender curve (as faithfully delineated in one of our graphic illustrations) and holes perforated in it for the insertion of the rope.

When the prisoner beheld the executioner ready to receive him, the sight of the rope did not seem to be appalling, for he readily turned toward the minister of justice, and appeared anxious for the close of the dreadful scene.

\* The number of respectable ladies present is, at once, a convincing proof of the intense curiosity which prevailed in this county to witness every action of Corder; for we are sure that nothing but this could have induced respectable females to have been present to witness a catastrophe so uncongenial with the delicacy of their sex, and with those kind and tender feelings which are, and, we trust, ever will be, the peculiar characteristic of the British fair. One lady, when gently chided for being present, said, that she had *a right* to witness the end of the man who had inhumanly butchered one of her sex.

After the cap had been drawn over his face, Mr. Orridge spoke to him, and immediately told the executioner to turn it up. Mr. Orridge then said to Corder, that if he had any declaration to make, that was the time. At this moment, the prisoner seemed unable to stand, and an officer supported him. He then said, in broken accents, "I am guilty—my sentence is just—I deserve my fate—and may God have mercy upon me!"

The greatest silence prevailed at this awful moment; but the crowd manifested an anxiety to know what the malefactor had said. Mr. Orridge then advanced to the front of the platform, and in a loud voice exclaimed—"The prisoner acknowledges his sentence to be just, and declares that he dies in peace with all mankind!" A number of persons then said, "Does he?—then may the Lord have mercy upon his soul!"

After the executioner had fixed the rope to the beam, and was busy in tying what he calls the "mysterious knot," it was suggested to him that he had left too much for what is technically called "the fall," in consequence of which he reluctantly took part of it up, and it was quite evident that *Mister Ketch* did not relish this interference with his public functions.

Everything being completely adjusted, the executioner descended from the scaffold, and just before the Reverend Chaplain had commenced his last prayer, he severed, with a knife, the rope which supported the platform, and Corder was cut off from the land of the living. Immediately he was suspended, *Ketch* grasped the culprit round the waist, in order to finish his earthly sufferings, which were at an end in a very few minutes. In his last agonies, the prisoner raised his hands several times; but the muscles soon relaxed, and they sank as low as the bandage round his arm would permit.

Thus terminated, by an awful and ignominious



death, the career of this guilty young man which, if we may judge from his youth and healthy appearance, would, but for his wickedness, have been prolonged to an advanced period, through which he might have lived in comfort and independence \*.

\* A good deal has been said about the awkwardness and brutality of the executioner, but we do not consider that he displayed either, although he was certainly disconcerted in consequence of the alteration which he was commanded to make; and it is, perhaps, owing to this, or a *nervous feeling* which it produced, that he precipitated the felon into eternity before the signal was given. This circumstance, however, did not cause any regret on the part of the Governor and Under Sheriff, for the prisoner was by this time in a fainting state, and it would have been impossible for him to have kept his standing another minute. After the execution was over, Foxton expressed his chagrin at having been interrupted in the performance of his professional duty. He said, "I never like to be meddled with, because I always study the *subjects* which come under my hands, and, according as they are tall or short, heavy or light, *I accommodate them with the fall*. No man in England has had so much experience as me, or knows how to do his duty better."

In the after part of the day, this public functionary visited the corpse in the Shire Hall, for the purpose of claiming Corder's trowsers, when he pointed to his handywork upon the neck of the criminal, and asked, exultingly, whether he had not "done the job in a masterly manner." A city contractor, who is in the habit of showing Foxton some favours, said to him one day, "Suppose I was to have the misfortune to be condemned to death, could you have the heart to hang me?" Foxton replied, (scratching his head), "You know, Master, somebody must do it, and why not me, because I know how to do it more *comfortably* for you than any body else!"

While speaking of the "finisher of the law," as he is designated in this age of improvement, we subjoin a few extracts from the Monthly Magazine, upon "hanging and hangmen."

The very names have honourable mention made of them, *ex gratiâ*:

"DERRICK—The name of the finisher of the law, or hangman, about the year 1608—'for he rides the Circuit with the devil, and Derrick must be his host, and Tiburne (Tyburn) the inne (inn) at which he will lighte (alight).' Vide Bellman of London, in art. 'Priggin Law.'—'At the gallows where I leave them, as at the haven at which they must all cast anchor, if Derrick's cables (ropes) do not hold.'—Ibid.

After the body was suspended, the Reverend Mr. Stocking read a short address which, could it have been heard by the vast concourse before him, would not have failed, we think, to have made an indelible impression upon their minds ; this was, indeed, an opportune moment to exhort the sinner to repentance and reformation, when the struggling victim to the offended laws of his country was ignominiously suspended before them—when they had ocular demonstration that “the wages of sin is death.”

Dun was hangman, as appears, temp. Henry VIII. But we must give the article of Ketch.

“KETCH.—Jack Ketch ; a general name for the finishers of the law, or hangmen, ever since the year 1682, when the office was filled by a famous practitioner of that name, of whom his wife said, that any bungler might put men to death, but only her husband knew how to *make them die sweetly*. This officer is mentioned in Butler’s Ghost, p. 54, published about the year 1682, in the following lines :—

Till Ketch observing—he was chous’d,  
And in his profits much abused,  
In open hall the tribute dunn’d  
To do his office or refund.

“Mr. Ketch had not long been elevated to his office ; for the name of his predecessor, Dun, occurs in the former part of this poem, page 29,

For you yourself to act squire Dun,  
Such ignomy ne’er saw the sun !

The addition of squire with which Mr. Dun is here dignified, is a mark that he had beheaded some state criminal for high-treason ; an operation which, according to custom for time out of mind, has always entitled the operator to that distinction.

“The predecessor of Dun was Gregory Brandon, from whom the gallows was called the Gregorian-tree, by which name it is mentioned in the prologue to Mercurius Pragmaticus, tragi-comedy, acted at Paris, &c. 1641.

This trembles under the black rod, and he  
Doth fear his fate from the Gregorian tree.

N. B. Gregory Brandon succeeded Derrick.”—*Monthly Mag.*



About an hour after the platform fell, the body was cut down, preparatory to its being removed to the Shire Hall, for the inspection of the public, and the multitude retired from the field of death\*.

---

#### PUBLIC VIEW OF THE BODY.

About an hour after the corpse of the murderer had been cut down, it was removed to a private room in the Shire Hall, where Mr. Creed, the County Surgeon, assisted by Mr. Smith and Mr. Dalton, made a longitudinal incision along the chest, as far as the abdominal parts, and folded back the skin so as to display the muscles of the chest to public view. The anxiety of the people to gain admission to see the mangled body of the murderer, was as intense as it had been at the trial and execution—the entrances to the court were literally crowded.

After the Surgeons had performed this preliminary operation, the body was removed to the Nisi Prius Court, where it was placed upon the large table divested of all its clothing, excepting the trousers and stockings.

The public were now admitted by one door, and

\* Immediately after the corpse had been taken into prison, there was a considerable scuffle among the spectators; numbers of whom wished to obtain a piece of the rope which ended the mortal career of the prisoner. Many exaggerated reports have gone forth with regard to the disposal of this "relic;" and some of the journals boldly asserted, that it sold after the rate of a guinea an inch; and moreover, that a gentleman came expressly from Cambridge, to purchase the rope for the purpose of adorning the Museum. That the cord made a considerable sum, there can be no doubt, for when Foxton was questioned about his perquisites, he replied, "What I got, I got, and that's all I shall say, except that *that are* was a very good rope."

passing by one end and along one side of the table, made their egress at the other, constables having been stationed to cause the visitors to keep moving. Many thousands of persons, and some of high respectability, and of both sexes, availed themselves of this last opportunity of seeing the remains of him who had so long been the principal theme of conversation.

At six o'clock the doors were closed, and two eminent artists, Mr. Mizotti, of Cambridge, and Mr. Child of Bungay\*, commenced their preparations for casts of the head and face of the murderer. The head and face were shaved before the plaster of Paris was applied, and Mr. Kelly's account of the proceedings at the dissection of Thurtell at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, was referred to for the mode pursued on that occasion (vide *Kelly's Newgate Calendar*, vol. vi. p. 383 †.) The countenance did not appear much changed, except that the under lip was drawn down so as to expose the teeth in

\* The first cast taken was by Mizotti, and through the kindness of a gentleman at Bury, it was transmitted to the publisher of this history on the following day. The bust was placed in the warehouse window in Paternoster-Row, for the inspection of the public, and perhaps there has been nothing exhibited in that quarter, for several years, which has attracted so much attention. Several eminent Surgeons have called to see the bust, and also numerous phrenologists, in order to take a description of the cranium, for the purpose of developing its organs.

† Thurtell, shortly before his execution, earnestly requested that a cast of his face might not be taken after death. "If," said he, "this should be the case, a bust may perhaps meet the eye of some of my family, and renew in their recollection the memory of a man who had caused them, not only the deepest grief, but exposed them to shame and disgrace."

Numerous were the applications of artists who went to Hertford for the express purpose of taking a cast, but G. Nicholson, Esq., the Under Sheriff, scrupulously complied with the earnest request of Thurtell. The restriction, however, if it was so intended, did not operate at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, for a cast of the face was actually taken, from which three drawings were engraved, and inserted in the publication to which we have already referred.



the upper jaw: this had also the effect, in a great degree, of obliterating the indentation which in life was very observable on the top of the chin. There appeared to be a considerable effusion of blood about the neck and throat, occasioned by the pressure of the rope in the moment of strangulation.

After the artists had completed their work, the body was removed from the Shire Hall to the County Hospital in a state of nudity; Mr. Foxton, the "finisher," having, as we have before stated, claimed and received the trowsers and stockings as a matter of "undoubted right."

---

#### DISSECTION OF THE BODY.

The following morning a great number of medical gentlemen, and a crowd of students, assembled at the County Hospital to witness the dissection of the body. Among the persons present were all the eminent practitioners who reside in the neighbourhood, and also some from Norwich, Cambridge, &c.

Mr. Creed, jun.\*, assisted by Mr. C. Smith and Mr. Dalton (the gentleman we named as connected with the proceedings of yesterday), commenced the operations; they laid bare the muscles of the chest with great precision, and having elevated the sternum and examined the lungs, they took out the intestines, all of which appeared in a healthy state. From the formation of the chest, it did not appear that Corder would have been a likely subject for pulmonary affection.

\* Mr. Creed, and another gentleman, have favoured us with their observations, which will be given *verbatim* in a subsequent page.

The students were then lectured, and heard demonstrations upon the respective parts already anatomized. The body was well-formed, and exhibited a considerable share of muscle.

The following

#### IMPORTANT QUESTION

which is worthy the consideration of the medical world and the public generally, arose upon the correctness of the testimony of the surgeons who gave evidence on the trial; and that question involved another, viz.—whether Corder's confession was to be credited, where he declares that he did not use any sharp instrument in the perpetration of his murderous purpose.

It appears that a great diversity of opinion prevailed; but the majority considered, that the declaration of Corder was entirely unworthy of credence, and they contended that the evidence given by the three surgeons, examined at the trial, was indubitably worthy of belief. An eminent and respectable physician, however, was of a different opinion, and contended that the wounds on the body were such as might have been inflicted by the mole-spade used in searching for it. He observed, that the wound between the fifth and sixth ribs, and the slight puncture in the apex of the heart, were *not sufficient to cause death*, nor to produce such an effusion of blood as Corder mentioned in his confession, none of the cavities of the heart being injured; and this supposition, he said, was justified by the probability that the sword had not penetrated more than two or three inches.

The lecturer then argued upon the improbability that Corder would have compromised his purpose by a partial execution of it, but would have plunged



the deadly instrument deeper, which, from its formation, he would have had no difficulty in doing\*. He also contended that the wound in the neck bore the character of inconsistency, inasmuch as it was longitudinal, whereas the object of the person inflicting it would have been to cut the throat, and a transverse wound was most likely to effect that purpose.

\* With regard to the argument relative to the mole-spade, we shall, in this part of our history, insert a letter, written and published by Mr. Nairn (one of the surgical witnesses on the trial), which appears to us to show the impossibility that such an instrument could have inflicted such wounds as those under consideration.

The learned lecturer argues the improbability that Corder would be diverted from his purpose, when by thrusting the sword a little further he might have effectually completed it.

Were we to hazard a conjecture, it would be this—that Corder was armed both with sword and pistols, and that he preferred effecting his barbarous design with the former, because had he been able to have done so, it would have been preferable to firing a pistol, the report of which might have led to a discovery, had any person been passing the barn at the time.

It will be remembered, that before the sword reached the ribs of the miserable victim, it had to perforate her apparel, part of which consisted of a pair of stays, lined with whalebone, which, of course, would obstruct the instrument, in some degree, in its passage.

The learned physician states, that the wounds inflicted as they are represented to have been, would not, in his opinion, have caused death. This supposition is favourable to our opinion, which is, that Maria, when she found a murderous weapon plunged into her body, which had not reached the vital part it aimed at, became a desperate assailant upon her murderer (she was nearly equal to him in weight and size, and he might be paralysed with guilt); and then it was, in that scuffle, to which the cold-blooded assassin alludes in his defence and confession, that he, as he says, “withdrew the pistol from his jacket-pocket and shot her dead instantly.”

Although we cannot attempt to

“Decide when doctors disagree,”

we submit that our hypothesis has some foundation in probability; and that, if true, it explains some of the ambiguous phrases used by the murderer, both at his trial and afterwards.

Before we make further remarks upon the “subject” under dissection, we shall take the liberty of introducing Mr. Nairn’s letter, explanatory of his reasons for entertaining the opinion he did (and which he appears not to have altered relative to the sword wounds.) The writer, although a young man, appears to be very intelligent, and we deem the communication not only *important*, but *satisfactory*.

“ Sir,

“ IN consequence of some doubts expressed as to the propriety of the evidence I gave on Corder’s trial, I am induced most unwillingly to appear once more before the public ;—a circumstance I could not have avoided, without acquiescing in the justness of the statements that have been made respecting my testimony. In giving my evidence respecting the wounds mentioned on the trial, I did not rely *solely* on my own opinion, but consulted several respectable members of the profession, whose judgment I could depend upon, formed, as I am convinced it was, on extensive research : their conclusion, I feel much satisfaction in stating, perfectly coincided with the opinion that I had formed as to the nature and character of the wounds.

“ I am fully convinced from physical facts that *more than the pistol* was used in despatching the unfortunate girl. Corder states that the moment he shot her, she fell instantly dead, and that there was a *prodigious flow* of blood following the infliction of the wound produced by the ball. My firm opinion is, that the wound in the face *was not of itself sufficient to produce instant death*. From its being a gunshot wound, and no great blood-vessels lying in its track, it is not likely that any such flow of blood could take place, as to render it *speedily fatal*. The track of the ball lies anterior to the trunk of the internal maxillary artery ; which, by the bye, is of no considerable size. Several branches of it were wounded ; but these being small ones, they would soon have ceased bleeding, aided and assisted by the languor of the circulation, induced by the shock occasioned by the shot. There is seldom much bleeding following gunshot wounds : I could illustrate this fact with numberless cases on the records of surgery, but shall merely content myself with stating two or three as sufficient to establish the truth of my statement. Hennen, in his ‘Observations on Mili-



tary Surgery,' relates a horrid case in which nearly one half of the face had been carried away by a round shot at Waterloo, yet there was *very little bleeding*. Baron Larrey, a great French authority, mentions a similar case. Cooper states witnessing a case in which all the lower jaw and a great portion of the upper were shot away; there was, in this instance, *scarcely any bleeding*, and no vessel required ligature. These cases need no comment.

"I must confess that I am rather sceptical with regard to Corder's statement; far, far be it from me to impute additional cruelty to the already too guilty man, yet I cannot divest myself of the impression that he has only stated *in part* the manner in which he destroyed her. I am the more fully confirmed in this opinion, from a communication that I have received from a scientific gentleman who was present at the inquest. He says, 'When I discovered the cut in the chemise, it was only from the effusion of blood I previously observed had taken place from about the region of the breast, and which had so copiously flowed down the internal surface of the shift, petticoat, &c., that I said to Mr. ———, "There is mischief to be found hereabouts," and *in the nauseating investigation of bloody folds I discovered the incision*.'

"Apologizing for the hasty and crude manner in which I have strung together these few observations,

I remain,

Your very obedient and humble Servant,  
J. C. N."

*Dedham, Aug. 16, 1828.*

We have also been favoured with the following postscript from the same writer, in reference to the contents of the above letter, and which appears to be well deserving attention.

"Under the head 'Bury News,' in the 'Morning Herald' of Thursday, August 14, I find it stated that an opinion has been given that the wounds mentioned were made by the mole-spade;—such a circumstance is next to an impossibility.

"I am surprised that any one should make such an assertion.

"Now it appears that the instrument penetrated nearly three inches; and it is well known that a mole-spade is formed at right angles with the edge; and a common school-

boy will prove that for a right angled instrument to penetrate three inches, the least possible incision must be of much greater dimensions than that on the shift or ribs.

“EXEMPLIFICATION.

“Let  $a b c$  be the portion of the mole-spade inflicting the wound, its greatest possible depth would be  $b c$ ; now  $b d$  is three inches: how then does this agree with the dimensions of the incision through the ribs, &c.? because  $a c$  will double nearly  $b d$ , making a wound six inches in length;—the other end, being *conically* pointed, would alter the character of the wound altogether.



“J. C. N.”

---

MR. ORRIDGE'S STATEMENT.

Being anxious to obtain the most recent information relative to this point, where so many observations have been made (we allude to the alleged sword wounds), we wrote to Mr. Orridge, who was so obliging as to return an answer immediately. Subjoined is an extract from his letter. The reader will draw his own conclusions, after having compared this with the other statements:—

(EXTRACT.)

“*Bury Gaol, Aug. 26, 1828.*

“With regard to the *confession* of the wretched Corder, it may be perhaps (as you seem to consider it) in a degree partial, but it should be remembered that he never denied any of the offences of which he was suspected or charged, or *declared himself innocent*;—his expressions were, ‘O spare me; the public must be satisfied with what I have confessed,’ thereby meaning, as I understand it, *spare me the recital*. I confess, from his having always denied the stabs, &c. and from his never having denied anything else, I am inclined to believe him in that particular.

“A few days after the body of Maria Marten was disinterred, Corder learned the particulars respecting the wounds, and the supposition that they had been inflicted with the sword.



Now it so happened that one morning I was in one of the cells, (unseen by him or any one,) when I heard him in conversation with another prisoner. He then said, 'If the story of the stabs is sworn to by the surgeon it will go near to hang me; but they had nothing to do with her (Maria's) death, for she died instantaneously from the pistol.' This statement, I find, he frequently made to the chaplain and the prisoners *long before the trial*. . . . . On one occasion, when I was conversing with him upon this subject, he persisted in his previous statement, and then exclaimed, 'O, Sir, the mistaken opinions of the surgeons about those wounds might have hung an innocent man.'

"From his never having declared himself innocent in any other particular, I cannot see any motive he could have for denying this.

"Should there be any thing further required, respecting this business, wherein I can give you information, pray command me.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Yours very truly,

"JOHN ORRIDGE."

Letter from Mr. Creed to the Editor, containing anatomical and other observations connected with the dissection of Corder:—

"Bury St. Edmund's, Aug. 13.

"SIR,

"As you wished to know how the dissection of William Corder was conducted, I with pleasure inform you, according to my promise. I did not write yesterday, thinking that the result of two days' dissection would be more satisfactory to you. At ten o'clock Mr. Smith and myself (two of the surgeons of the Suffolk hospital) proceeded to dissect the body. Dr. Yellowby, a physician of Norwich hospital, came over for the express purpose of seeing the surfaces of the mucous and serous membranes exposed: there were also a great number of medical gentlemen from considerable distances present, as well as those residing in this town and its immediate neighbourhood. The first step of dissection was to examine the parts of the sternum, and accurately to describe them to the gentlemen present, which, from the fine state of the subject, and his great muscularity,

were well marked; the external and internal abdominal wings were exposed to view, as well as the fascias, &c. &c. forming the stricture in that dreadful disease. The cavity of the thorax or chest was next laid open, and the truth of his (Corder) having laboured under a pleuritic disease was verified by the firm adhesions of the lungs (on the right side) to the pleura covering the ribs; with this exception the whole viscera of the thorax, abdomen, and pelvis, were remarkably healthy. A quantity of serous fluid was effused into both sides of the chest, (about two or three ounces,) and the lungs were gorged with blood.

“ Upon the pericardium being opened, about half an ounce of serum was discovered in the heart, which was about the natural size. The left side was quite empty, but the right auricle and ventricle were full of blood, as well as the descending and ascending vena cava, the contents of which, from the sudden death of Corder, was perfectly fluid. Not the least coagulum was found in the cavities of the heart,—the internal surface of the aorta and vena cava were very abraded, but the external surface was more so—the vasa vasorum being fully distended, the stomach was removed, and carefully examined. Upon the inner surface being exposed, it exhibited very strong marks of what is generally called inflammation, the mucous and villous coats being loaded with blood, and the rugæ of the latter coat were very prominent, and corresponded with the description of the membranes so well explained, and published by Dr. Yellowby, in a number of the Philosophical Transactions. That gentleman obligingly explained the phenomenon, and compared it with the state of the stomach of persons dying from poison, and from hydrophobia, which it closely resembles, showing how fallacious must be the opinion that rests only upon one proof of either such important circumstances; the pylorus of the stomach, and the duodenum, were more vascular than any other part—the large and other small intestines partook of this state; the kidneys were rather enlarged.

“ An interesting discussion took place, respecting the cause of death from hanging—whether it was *suffocation* or *pressure* upon the spinal chord. From the circumstance of the chest and shoulders of Corder being observed *to heave* several minutes after the drop fell, it was generally admitted that death most probably took place from the latter cause.

“ I must not forget to mention the remarkable contraction



of the stomach, as well as of the bladder, probably depending upon the shock given to the nervous system. The abdomen contained a considerable quantity of fluid. The thoracic duct was very \* \* \* to its conjunction with the left subclavian vein, but there was no appearance of chyle in it. It is to be regretted that the brain cannot be examined, as the determination of making a skeleton prevents any part of the bones being destroyed. The trachea, or windpipe, was examined, and part of it laid open—it appeared very highly inflamed on its internal surface.

“The dissection is to be resumed to-morrow; and it has on both days excited considerable interest, and a great number of respectable persons have visited the hospital, and witnessed it. With regard to the phrenological proportions of the head, they are not yet fully described. My friend, Mr. Child of Bungay, took two moulds from it, but not having yet finished a cast, there has not been time to examine the different developements.

“The remark of Mr. Child was, that there was rather a want of the parts indicating intellectual qualities. The forehead, although high, was very depressed, or inclined backwards.

“The moment that the result of Mr. Child’s investigation reaches me, I will forward it to you.

“I find that the Reverend Mr. Stocking has ordered a cast to be forwarded to you.

“I am fearful that some little inaccuracies will be found in this account; but you will excuse them, from the hurry in which I am obliged to write, my time being so occupied in the dissection, and my other professional avocations; but I would not allow a day to pass, without furnishing you with the best account I could.

“I remain, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“GEORGE CREED.”

To Mr. J. C.

---

## PHRENOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We were also favoured with the following letter from Mr. Creed, pursuant to his promise of the 13th of August.

*"Bury, Aug. 16, 1828.*

"SIR,

"I take the earliest opportunity of informing you of the result of my friend's inquiry respecting the phrenological developements of Corder's head. I heard from him last night. \* \* \* He finds the following organs, which form the principal features of the cranium, viz. *Secretiveness, acquisitiveness, destructiveness, philoprogenitiveness, and imitiveness*. I may add, that a cast has been sent to Dr. Spurzheim, whose report we expect in a few days. If, therefore, you wish for his opinion, I shall be happy to send it you.

"The dissection is nearly completed. The muscles of the arm have been dissected, and a fine cast of them has been taken. The heart I, also, have minutely dissected, and shall make a preparation of it. Thus shall I be able to show visitors to our hospital, at distant periods, the skeleton, heart, and cast of the outward features of the head and face of this horrid murderer

"I remain, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

To Mr. J. C.

"G. CREED."

The same post conveyed the following, which was written by a medical gentleman, of great respectability, residing in Bury.

*"Bury St. Edmund's, Aug. 16, 1828.*

"DEAR SIR,

"In compliance with your request, made through Mr. Orridge, I shall endeavour to furnish you with the most prominent appearances which were presented on the dissection of Corder's body.

"On the removal of the body to the Shire-hall, where it was visited by several thousands of people, male and female, casts were taken of the head and neck by Mazotti. We



have had no special Phrenologists here for the purpose of examination, and Phrenology is a science in which I am not minutely versed; still I am enabled to give you the development of the most material organs of the murderer's cranium. The Craniologists will doubtlessly arrogate Mr. Corder's head, as a support to their now half-exploded science. The organ of *destructiveness* is, unfortunately, extremely small; but to counterbalance that defect, we have those of *combativeness*, and *secretiveness*, very large; as also that of *acquisitiveness* (theft). *Adhesiveness* (or attachment) is likewise fully developed; so is *cautiousness*. *Firmness* (or perseverance) is rather full. The *intellectual* development is very confined. The organs of *benevolence* and *veneration* are almost wanting.

"Corder's body, though measuring something less than five feet six, affords as fine a display of muscular proportion and strength, *a capite ad calcem*, as I have ever witnessed. The muscles of the limbs, particularly, prove him to have possessed great activity and power. I should say, arguing from the appearance of the muscles and ligaments of the feet and legs, that he was a first-rate pedestrian, or might have been, if he pleased.

"The body was perfectly healthy, and every organ sound. The suspicion of incipient disease of the lungs, alluded to by the surgeon for the defence, seems to have had little real foundation in fact. The most interesting appearance to the anatomist in this dissection, was that presented by the stomach and intestines on opening the abdomen. These appeared as if in a state of high inflammation, exhibiting, almost throughout, a fine vermilion blush. The stomach was very much corrugated, and had the cause of death been unknown, might have raised an opinion, from its appearance externally and internally, that the person had been destroyed by a large dose of arsenic. This was, however, exactly the appearance we were led to expect from former experience.

"Some of your metropolitan prints, I perceive, announced the discovery of some scrofulous marks on the neck. They were deceived (I calculate) by the handywork of Mr. Foxton, as I could trace none such on the most minute inspection. All the marks which I could trace were the *cicatrices* of some old \* \* \* \* chancres.

"Dear Sir,

"Yours truly,

"J. MACINTYRE."

## JUSTIFICATION OF THE CORONER.

The observations of the learned Judge, in summing up the case to the jury, and the following additional facts and remarks with which we have been supplied, will amply answer that part of the complaint (put into the mouth of the unhappy man, and uttered by him as part of his defence) which relates to the proceedings of the inquest and the conduct of the Coroner :—

1. As to the prisoner not being permitted to be present whilst the witnesses were undergoing their examination. When the adjourned inquest was held, Mr. Humphreys, a very able solicitor, attended for the prisoner, and claimed the right of his being allowed to be present—the Coroner called upon Mr. Humphreys to produce some authority in support of such a claim, which the latter failed to do. The Coroner then stated his willingness that the prisoner should have all the evidence, as well that given at the first meeting of the jury as that given at the adjournment, read over to him, before the case should be summed up to the jury, in order that he might make any remarks he might deem material, or produce any evidence in his power to contradict or rebut it. To this plan Mr. Humphreys fully assented, and expressly waved the point as to the prisoner being in the room during the investigations. After the witnesses were examined, Corder was brought down by Lea, the officer, and the Coroner proceeded to read over all the evidence given at the first inquest, and part of the evidence which had been given in the presence of Mr. Humphreys, who then requested the Coroner to proceed no further, saying it was unnecessary to read the remainder, as he had taken notes of it while the witnesses were examined ; and upon



leaving the room, he expressed his thanks to the Coroner for the impartiality and attention which he had shown during the investigation. To prompt, therefore, the unhappy man to complain of his exclusion from the inquest after this, was useless, unfair, and improper.

2. The second branch of the complaint was, that the Coroner had taken evidence on oath, after the inquest, in the absence of the prisoner. That he had authority to do so, will be clearly shown by the following extract from an ancient summary of the nature and duty of the Office of Coroner, by Britton, who lived at the time of the passing of the statute of 4 Edw. I. de Officio Coronatoris:—

“ § 11. And if the Coroners, upon the first inquiry, shall suspect the truth to be concealed, *or* that it be necessary to make *further inquiry*, and by *others*, let *his inquiry be often*, but in no point to change or alter his enrolment, upon account of any contrariety in the verdicts.

“ This 11th section being obscurely expressed, it is proper to give the original, to show that the obscurity is not in the translation alone:—

‘ Et si le Coroner de la premiere enquest eyt suspicion de concelement de la verité ou q mester soit de plus enquer et par *autres* si enquerge plusours foits. Mes pour noul contrariete de verdit, ne change ne amenuse son enroutemêt en nul point.’—The word ‘ *autres* ’ applies to other *evidence*, not other jurors.”—Mir. c. 1. s. 13. 2 Haler. P. C. 927, Notes. Brit. 126.

In addition to this authority the general duty of the Coroner, as a conservator of the peace at common law, would authorize him to take subsequent depositions which are merely for the use of the Judge of Assize. The same proceeding constantly occurs in cases of felony.

3. The third branch of the complaint was, that

the coroner acted as attorney for the prosecution,—a practice very general where he is a professional man, and it is impossible to state any good reason for the objection: the proceedings before him are of a preliminary nature and not binding, and he has no other means of knowing the facts of the case than such as are equally within the reach of any other attorney employed for a prosecution. Why, therefore, should *he* be excluded from acting in aid of *public justice*?—It may be said, an *Inquest* is like an *Indictment*—so is a criminal information filed by the Attorney General, and yet whoever heard an objection made to the Attorney General conducting the case of a prosecution where he had filed such an information?—On the contrary, it is his constant practice to do so, and the two cases are strictly analogous, thus furnishing an answer to the objection. In the present instance also, we find *Mr. Wayman* had, for several years, been the regular attorney for the parish of Polstead, and therefore it would have been extremely hard to have excluded him from continuing to act on the part of the Crown, merely because he happened to be entrusted with a public office, in which he had duties to perform upon oath, not at all incompatible with his duty as the professional agent for the parish.

---

#### CORDER AND THE GENERAL POST OFFICE.

In page 191 we referred to a note which the prisoner hastily wrote to his legal advisers, and at the same time stated the most probable conjecture as to its import.

We have since been favoured with a copy of the



note written by Corder on the day in question, which we shall give verbatim:—

“As the five-pound note has been said something about—(vide page 158)—had it not better be excepted\*, I fear Matthews will be called to contradict some parts of my confession to him. Let me know your opinion.”

“To Mr. CHARNOCK.”

We believe that it is not generally known, that several witnesses were subpoenaed on the trial who were not called to give evidence, but such is the fact.

Among others was Mr. Francis, (Secretary to Sir F. Freeling,) who attended with a letter written by Maria Marten, the object of which was to show, on the part of the prisoner, that the report of his having purloined the five-pound note was unfounded.

The learned Judge, (near to whom the Secretary sat during the trial) having refused to receive the evidence of Peter Matthews, Esq., relative to the note, the witness (Mr. Francis) was not called.

Mr. Francis has paid us a visit since the trial, and favoured us with a sight of Maria's letter, which was written in a good plain hand, and very correct in its orthography. The following is a faithful copy:—

“*Polstead, February 27, 1827.*”

“MADAM,

“This is to certify, that the letter posted at Wokingham, January the 3rd., and directed ‘To Thomas Marten, Polstead,’ wherein was enclosed a five-pound

\* It is perhaps difficult to guess what Corder meant by the word *excepted*, unless it be, that, in reading his defence, he should pass it over—the prisoner, it will be remembered, studiously avoided all allusion to that part of the evidence, when he addressed the Court and Jury.

Bank of England note, I duly received on the following Friday, January the 5th."

"I remain,

"Your obedient Servant,

To

"MARIA MARTEN\*."

*Miss Savage,*

*Post Office, Colchester.*

---

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a melancholy reflection, that the year 1828 should have its judicial history stained by the detail of more sanguinary deeds than have occurred in the same period during the present century. Nearly twenty persons have, within the short space of six months, been convicted of murder, which, as Shakspeare says, at best is "foul"—but many of these have been

"Most strange, foul, and unnatural."

In the early period of the year, a man was executed at York for the murder of his brother.—A nephew (the son of the former) for the murder of his uncle, and then a female parricide, for the murder of her aged parents at Lancaster. Scarcely had these unnatural wretches expiated their crimes by the just forfeiture of their lives at York and

\* It is well known, that when Corder was threatened with a prosecution by Mr. Matthews, he induced poor Maria, by threats, to write this letter, which, being the first time she had acted with duplicity towards Mr. Matthews, gave her a great deal of uneasiness, and was, among other things, the frequent cause of bickering between her and Corder.

The interesting particulars relative to the five pound note alluded to, will be found in page 45; and Corder's confession of the robbery, in a letter sent by him to Mr. Matthews, is inserted in page 159.



Lancaster, than the Eastern part of the kingdom, yea, the nation itself—and even the world, were astounded, by the details of a murder, which, in point of atrocity and deliberate villany, as well as the mystery in which it was enveloped, surpassed the *foulest* of the foul which had preceded it. In this case, deformity annihilated beauty, and a faithless lover imbrued his hands in the blood of his faithful and confiding, though not faultless mistress.

We have given a detailed account of this melancholy event; it is pregnant with instruction of a moral tendency, and worthy the observance of youth of both sexes; it also furnishes matter of deep interest for the consideration of the reflecting Christian.

This history unfolds the dreadful consequences of a departure from the path of rectitude, and strikingly displays the retributive providence of God; it moreover exhibits a powerful dissuasive against the pursuit of worldly pleasures and sensuality.

Men are apt to advance specious reasons why God will not punish the sinner for the enjoyment to pleasure, but the infallible Oracle of truth declares, that “He that liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth.” Whoever entered into the mansion of sinful Pleasure (that subtle sorceress!) with-leaving his garment in the hand of shame? Her house is the avenue of death, and the vestibule of hell.

The effeminate Sardanapalus perished amidst the luxuries of his palace. Belshazzar, while feasting with his thousand lords, beheld the terrible and mysterious characters, “*MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN*,” \* upon the wall, and although a prophet was present to explain the sentence, it could not be averted.—So Corder, the slave of sinful lusts,

\* Daniel, chap. v., verse 25.

drank deeply of the intoxicating draughts of unlawful pleasure, until his intellectual faculties became benumbed, and his conscience seared as with a hot iron—he was rendered capable of any crime—became a murderer of the foulest description, and his sun went down ere he had arrived at the noon of his existence, and ignominiously sunk beneath the horizon of a gallows !—“ The wages of sin is death.”

“ Can guilt, though hidden from the gaze of earth,  
Fly from His view, who gave all being birth ?  
From the first shadow on the yielding soul,  
To the dark hour when all her terrors roll,  
His sleepless eye detects each buried plan,  
And bares the bosom secret of the man.  
Yes ! oft He locks the weapon in the hand,  
And makes the murderer for his capture stand ;  
Or when the flood of years has roll'd away  
The darksome horrors of the blood-cursed day,  
His vengeance frowns upon the felon's sleep,  
Forcing his haggard eye to wake and weep.  
\* \* \* \* \*

Why stands the murderer fettered to the spot,  
Life, fame, and judgment in his guilt forgot ?  
With ashy lips in cold convulsion spread,  
And fear-drops oozing from his tortur'd head ;  
Chained by his crime, he cannot—dare not fly,  
A spirit seems to grasp him from the sky \*.  
And though no human eye the murder sees,  
A curse from heaven comes mutter'd in each breeze.”

R. MONTGOMERY.

Various have been the conjectures, and many persons have been at a loss to discover the motive which instigated Corder to the murder of the unfor-

\* This beautiful description of the power of conscience was strikingly exemplified in the case of Corder, who, when apprehended by Lea, stood riveted to the spot, while the officer was detailing the particulars of the dreadful charge against him to Mr. Moore. And although a passport had been provided for him to go to France, he appears to have been

“ Chain'd by his crime ; he *could* not, *dare* not fly”  
from that land which was disgraced by his barbarities.



fortunate Maria Marten ; and the miscreant in his defence, urged as a proof of his innocence, the absence of all probable cause for his destroying her. We, however, in looking at the facts which have been disclosed, can perceive strong grounds for believing that he had a powerful incentive to the commission of the deed : namely, his own preservation ; for, we as firmly believe that he destroyed his infant, as that he murdered the mother. It is said, that the child died suddenly, but from what complaint, or in what manner, is left wholly unexplained, excepting that we are informed that it died in a fit. If, we ask, the child had come by its death from a natural cause, would not Corder and Maria have been anxious to disclose the fact, so as to have removed every suspicion of foul play having been practised ? But what is the fact ? Corder takes away the body by stealth, and we have no information how it was disposed of, excepting the vague account he gives in his defence : viz., that he buried it in a field ; but neither the field nor the spot are mentioned. This is one of the facts connected with this mysterious tale, which remains a secret, and which perhaps will never be developed. We can discover no reason for the secrecy observed as to the death and burial of this child, unless it was destroyed, as we firmly believe it was, by Corder. Had the unfortunate mother's deviation from the path of virtue been a secret, her giving birth to a child unknown to the world, we can imagine, in the case of the child's death, that the mother and her friends might have secreted the body with a view of hiding her shame ; but this was not the case with Maria : she had had two children, one of whom was living with her, and her intimacy with Corder was notorious : thus, therefore, no delicacy of feeling for her reputation operated to cause the profound secrecy which was observed ; and at all

events, if the child died a natural death, there is no reason why Corder should have taken the body away to bury it—he would surely have left it to be disposed of by the mother and her friends ; but on the other hand, if he destroyed the child, he had a deep interest indeed in removing and secreting the body. If, therefore, our supposition be correct, that Corder was the murderer, and that his crime was known by Maria, his life was in her hands ; if she required him to marry her, and threatened disclosure if he refused, he was placed in this situation—he must either comply with her request, be subject to her accusation—or, murder her in order to destroy the evidence of his guilt.

The opinion we have thus ventured to express is very materially strengthened and confirmed by the written confession of the delinquent, and his mode of expression when urged to make an *unreserved* disclosure. That the statement signed by Corder in the presence of Mr. Orridge, and which is called his Confession, is not a *true* and *faithful* account of the transaction, we think every one must be convinced. He therein insinuates that his shooting her was the effect of momentary irritation arising from her scuffling with him, after a quarrel of three-quarters of an hour, and that he “ was overwhelmed with agitation and dismay when the deed was committed \*.” That the poor girl entered into a personal conflict with Corder, unless indeed when she saw him aiming at her life, is too improbable to require refutation ; and that he premeditated her destruction when he took her from her father’s cot-

\* We have it from unquestionable authority that the defence, as originally prepared, asserted that Maria drew the pistol from her pocket, and presented it at him, at the same time declaring she would immediately despatch him, unless he took her to Ipswich and married her ; and that it was in his struggle to wrest the pistol from her hand, that it accidentally went off and shot her.—ED.



tage is demonstrated by numerous and incontrovertible facts—his falsehoods to intimidate her to leave home—his pretence that he had obtained a licence, and was taking her away to marry her, and had a chaise ready to convey her—his anxiety that she should go in disguise to the Barn to avoid being recognised, and his providing himself with loaded pistols, together with other facts proved on the trial; all these circumstances, we say, clearly show that his only object was to get her into his own power for the purpose of destroying her.

There is one admission in this written statement which speaks volumes. He says, “When we left her father’s house we began quarrelling about the burial of the child, she apprehending that the place wherein it was deposited would be found out.”

Now, unless the finding the body would have led to the discovery that it had met with a premature death, why should either of the parties be under any apprehension? And if she had really expressed the fears which he imputed to her, we ask why should he quarrel with her for so doing? because, as he deposited the child, if there was danger in the discovery, his safety was involved; and instead of quarrelling with her, he ought to have felt grateful for her anxiety on his account.

We are of opinion that a quarrel might have taken place relative to this child, and we suspect also that Corder has suppressed some parts of what occurred, and misrepresented others.

It is not improbable that Corder might have sought some cause for provocation, before he could “screw up his courage to the *sticking* point;” before he could bring his mind to destroy his victim; he might have, and we think did, introduce the topic about the child to effect his object; and if Maria previously threatened to accuse him, it is very likely he upbraided her for having done so, and ex-

pressed his determination of preventing her from carrying her threat into execution. If anything like this took place, we say it would account for her scuffling and laying hold of him, as he says she did at the time he drew the pistol from his pocket and shot her. Well might he then have felt agitation and dismay :—

“ Aghast and quaking see the murderer *stand*,  
Shrink from himself, and clench his crimson hand ;  
Unearthly terror gripes his shudd’ring frame,  
While Conscience writhes upon the rack of Shame ;  
*Beneath him gasps the victim of his deed,*  
*In that faint struggle ere the spirit ’s freed ;*  
*One piteous gaze—her languid eyelids close,*  
*And life and torture sink to dead repose.”*

R. MONTGOMERY.

It is worthy of remark, that Corder in his statement carefully avoids mentioning where the child was buried, and instead of ingenuously naming the spot where it could be found, uses these words—“ *the place wherein it was deposited.*”

There is another confirmatory fact in favour of our hypothesis. Mr. Orridge states, that after he had suggested to Corder the necessity of making a confession, the prisoner exclaimed “ *I am a guilty man !*” The Governor then proceeded to question him as to the particulars of his offence, *which he told Corder the public had supposed him to be guilty of.* It is quite clear, from the language used by Mr. Orridge, that that gentleman was alluding to *some other offence* than that of which he had been justly convicted ; because the word *supposed* could not refer to the murder of Maria Marten : but if there were any doubt on this subject, the answer of Corder at once removes it. He said, “ Oh ! spare me : I can only mention to you the *particulars of how Maria came by her death.* With this the public *must* be satisfied ; I cannot say more.” What stronger proof, we



ask, can be adduced than these his own words, that *besides the particulars* relating to the murder of Maria Marten, he had committed some other offence of so heinous a nature, that he desired to be spared the horror of relating it? and he says the public *must* therefore be satisfied with the acknowledgment of the particulars of her murder only, and his expression, “*I cannot say more,*” may, without any forced interpretation, be construed into “*I will not confess anything else.*” Why should he, on another occasion, inquire the utility of giving a detail of the history of his past life and offences, which would only have the effect of *disgracing* his family, upon whom rested a sufficient load of stigma already?

In addition to these remarks, there are many points in the evidence at the trial, to prove the mysterious manner in which this child was disposed of, and which go to strengthen the supposition that he had murdered it. Mrs. Marten says\*, “the prisoner brought Maria and the child home in a gig, and in about a fortnight afterwards the infant died in my arms. I have heard conversations between the prisoner and Maria, about the burial of the child, and he said it was buried at Sudbury †.” In another part of her evidence, the witness states that when the child was taken away, Maria was absent two nights from home, and the prisoner admits that they were secretly spent at his mother’s.

This conduct on the part of Corder manifestly proves that there was something wrong respecting the death and burial of the child; for if all was correct, why were such pains taken to deceive the father of Maria by vile fabrications? Thomas Marten must have naturally felt, as much as any

\* Page 132.

† The question was not put as to the manner of its death; but the witness told us several times that it appeared to die in a fit.

one, for the welfare of his daughter, and if the child had died naturally, and it had been thought necessary for Maria's interest, that its death and burial should be kept a secret, would not her father, in preference to all other persons, have been consulted on the subject? Again, Corder, in his defence, says, "I took Maria to Sudbury, to give birth to the child, in order to conceal her pregnancy from my mother;" and certainly if he had an interest in keeping the secret from his family before birth, the same feeling was likely to operate upon him afterwards; and, to a depraved and cruel mind like his, nothing but the destruction of the little innocent would probably be considered as effectual for his purposes.

Corder says that the child died in the arms of Mrs. Marten; but although he alludes to, and complains of the suspicions thrown out by the public press respecting its death, it is remarkable that no effort was made by his counsel to remove these suspicions, by cross-examining Mrs. Marten, as to the cause and manner of the child's death, (vide the note in the foregoing page); and we again advert to the remarkable fact, that, although he speaks of the burial of the child, he affords no clue to the spot where it might be found, but contents himself with saying, "It was agreed between Mrs. Marten, Maria, and me, that the child should be buried in the fields."\* Were it not for the quantity of important matter which will find a place in our future pages of this tale of mystery, misery, and woe, many other points arising out of the evidence might be adverted to, by which the suspicion we entertain would be confirmed, and tend, as we think, to convince every intelligent and acute reader of the facts of this horrible and cold-

\* Vide note page 207, where a cogent reason is assigned, to prove the fallacy of the insinuation relative to Mrs. Marten.



blooded murder, that we have a just right to impeach the veracity of Corder's pretended confession, and to suspect that his real motive for murdering Maria was to save him from the accusation, and the penal consequences of another murder previously committed. We say, fearless of contradiction, that the confession of Corder was anything but explicit and complete, and we fear that, as he had lived a murderer, so he died a hypocrite, so far as related to his confession.

What a field does this man's life, and its awful termination, open for moral reflection! and the result of those reflections may produce a beneficial effect. The study of human nature, in its worst character, from the first dawn of vice, through the gradation of crime, to the fatal effect thereof, is, though not gratifying, useful to the cause of humanity! The virtuous mind may be strengthened in the path of rectitude, and the depraved must be appalled by the reflection, that justice, though it be sometimes tardy in its pursuit, is, nevertheless, inevitable. The very means which Corder adopted for his deliverance became a weapon in the hands of justice; and it appears that Providence interposed, to induce the line of defence which he pursued: "*Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*"\* Although every probability was against it, this cool calculating villain was permitted to use it, which induced him in the end, with all his hardened effrontery, to acknowledge his guilt, and take off the foul imputation which he had thrown upon his victim.

That great Being who had denounced murder in his word, prevented, by his providence, the escape of the murderer. "Be sure your sin will find you out," is one of the general laws of the Divine government,

\* Whom God intends to destroy, he first deprives of reason.

which neither felons nor fiends can resist, when the moral purposes of that government require their confession or exposure. Although no human eye witnessed the barbarous deed, an Omniscient observer took cognizance of it, and brought the offender to the bar of justice. This case is truly horrible in all its parts—horrible from the manner in which the crime was committed,—horrible when we reflect upon the entire confidence and firm reliance which the deluded Maria had in the affection of Corder—horrible, when we consider that she met with a cruel and premature death, at the very instant when she contemplated being married to the man on whom she had placed her affections,—horrible, when we suppose that she yielded not her life without a struggle, or an attempt to move the pity of her murderer. Nevertheless, this case, dreadful and unparalleled as it is, will be attended with this effect:—it will show to demonstration, that all attempts to conceal a crime like this are ineffectual; that the murderer cannot, by any act of ingenuity, wash away blood, or destroy the means calculated to lead to his detection:—circumstances, which he considers trivial and unimportant, become of magnitude sufficient to overwhelm him, so that even a handkerchief or a cloak may become a swift witness against him.

The fate of Corder was just, and we will not attempt, by a sickly sensibility, to excite the sympathy of our readers for the murderer, because that would only tend to weaken the moral lesson which that fate is calculated to enforce, and which is the primary object of the publisher of *The History of the Polstead Murder* \*.

\* There is an awful coincidence in the history of Maria Marten, viz. Thomas Corder was her first seducer, and William Corder became her lover and her murderer. What a lesson does the premature death of these young men hold out to the base destroyers of female innocence!



CORDER'S WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE DURING  
THE TIME HE WAS CONFINED IN  
BURY GAOL.

We have been favoured with the following correspondence between Corder, his wife, and his friends, during his imprisonment. With regard to the letters written by him, we shall make no comment, except by an occasional note, merely observing that they strikingly exhibit man as a mysterious compound.

The letters addressed by Mrs. Corder to her guilty partner deserve peculiar attention, inasmuch as they breathe the language of a loving wife, a kind and unwearied friend, and a Christian monitor— they do credit both to her head and her heart, and appear to us to be an ample atonement for the trespass which she made upon the rules of society, by the precipitate manner in which she formed an alliance with the author of all her misery.

We would just observe, that as she did not repine at the consequences, dreadful as they were, the world ought not to be hypercritical, or censorious upon her conduct, but rather, as we sincerely do, pity her misfortunes.

---

*“ Bury Gaol, Suffolk, 28th April, 1828.*

“ MY MUCH INJURED AND AFFLICTED WIFE,

“ I arrived at this solitary prison on Friday, at ten o'clock at night, after a most dreadful day of misery. That night and the following day I was labouring under the most imaginable affliction, alas! being confined by

myself, without a single individual to ease me of my grief ; on Saturday night I was quite worn out, and it pleased God to relieve me with sleep. The next morning (Sunday) I was summoned to attend chapel ; but I must first tell you, the minister brought me a Bible and Prayer-Book on Saturday, and hearing of my awful situation, a sermon was preached on the occasion ; the text was taken from 5th chap. 2nd Corinthians, 10th verse ; the words particularly reminded me of the Day of Judgment, where we must all one day appear, and “receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad.” Oh ! that I may be instantly led into the way of truth, which is my prayer to God, whose laws I have so grievously offended. I cannot but reflect upon the good advice which you have so often bestowed upon me, a poor lost sinner, unworthy of any one blessing. Yes, my dear wife, I feel persuaded my sins are more in number than the hairs of my head. Were it possible, how gladly would I fly to receive instructions from you ; but alas ! the time is now past. I have made application for you to visit me an hour or two daily, thinking you might have taken lodgings at Bury ; but that favour, I find, is not allowed : so that I am altogether deprived of my only earthly comfort, excepting through your pen, from which I hope to derive some consolation ; and by searching the holy word of God, I hope to find forgiveness, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners. Oh ! that I may be one of his chosen people ; yet how can I expect his brightness to shine upon me, knowing that I have always neglected to attend to his holy word. Our minister has kindly offered me any of his religious books, for on religion I must now build my hopes. My time is short—I must soon depart from this vale of misery, and true it is, man has but a short time to live, and even those who may now be in a good flow of spirits and health, if they look over a short space of time, they will be no more seen for ever. For my part, I could wish it were to-morrow, but God’s will must be done. I cannot forget your severe affliction, and my dear mother’s and sister’s. Were it not, my dear wife, for the afflictions of those I have left behind, I should be better able to prepare myself for another world. I have to intreat that you will write to my sister, and as soon as you find yourself capable, visit them, for I think perhaps you may, in some measure, be a comfort to each other. My prayers are constant, that the all-sufficient Providence may protect and support you,



hoping to meet you again in this world, and in the next may we all obtain everlasting felicity. With respect to this world, Mr. and Miss Orridge have offered me every favour their regulations will admit of, and we are all allowed common necessities, with which I have reason to hope your good brother will supply you, and I am anxious to hear how he was received at my mother's on Friday. When you feel disposed, come and see me, which, I think, had better not take place at present, as you will be allowed so few minutes with me, and that in the presence of a third person. Let me hear from you as soon as possible. I have not been able to write to mother, nor any one of my friends. I shall be happy to receive a few lines from your brother, although I do not feel able to write to him. May God bless and protect you. I subscribe myself

"Your unfortunate, and almost broken-hearted husband,

"WILLIAM CORDER.\*"

---

"*Bury Gaol, May 2, 1828.*

"MY BELOVED WIFE,

"As it is necessary to provide for the support of nature during the time we are in existence, I wish to know if you feel perfectly satisfied with respect to my property—you are better acquainted with the parties than myself, and, remember, I have no one in this world but you to consult, and should it not be to your entire satisfaction, I entreat you to inform me. I am at liberty to make any alteration you think proper. I gave \* \* \* \* all the money I took with me, excepting three sovereigns, in consequence of the officers threatening to take it from me, saying I should pay my own expenses. I have several times attempted to write

\* This was the first letter written by Corder after his arrival at Bury Gaol, and one cannot help remarking what an incongruous animal is man!—how unsuitable are his expressions in comparison with his character. This letter contains the effusions of a captured murderer, writhing under the pangs of guilt (for he says, "*I must soon depart from this vale of misery.*") Upon what principle, therefore, can we reconcile his scriptural quotations, and his hope of becoming "one of God's chosen people?"—The tongue even of Charity is mute.

to my mother, but this disgraceful event prevents me, I cannot—I dare not address her.

“ Yours, &c.

‘ WM. CORDER.\*

“ I hope her comforts are attended to.”

“ *Bury Gaol, May 3.*

“ MY DEAR WIFE,

“ Let me entreat you that you do not give ear to the false reports which are abroad, for they will only add to your distress. You are aware that such news as this quickly spreads, with much false rumour. It may be you did not understand to whom I have made an assignment; and which I hope is to your satisfaction. Let me tell you, I. W. B., with whom you dined on Sunday, was with me on the 25th, and I feel persuaded that he knows these things as well as any man. He told me I could make any alteration before my trial, which I will do, if it is not to your satisfaction. Should I have counsel, (which I shall hear further about from my legal adviser,) which I think myself will *be useless*, as the evidence is so very strong against me; but be that as it may, after all expenses and debts are paid, I am convinced there will be at least three hundred pounds, which I should wish you to enjoy after my departure (should it please God to take me first) from this vale of tears and misery. Let me once more exhort you not even to look at a newspaper, as there are so many ready to represent me in the blackest colours. I think it would be advisable for you not to come up so frequently, as we are allowed so little time for conversation, and that at such a distance from each other. I should advise once or twice a week for an interview, or otherwise, when we feel disposed, we can write to each other as often as we please. This is certainly a most severe affliction for you: therefore, let me hope the divine power above will support you. If we look

\* This letter proves that Corder lost no time in making arrangements in regard to his worldly property; and he appears to have exercised his usual caution by transferring to a friend the greatest proportion of the twenty sovereigns which his wife gave him before he left Brentford. His sentiments in regard to his afflicted mother are commendable.



over a short space of time, and we shall be no more. I hope that we shall obtain that happy state where there shall be no more sorrows, and no more pain, and where all tears shall be wiped for ever from our eyes. Let us remember our afflictions come from a good and gracious God, who is all-sufficient, and who hath promised all those eternal life who diligently seek him. Yes, my dearest wife, he has assured us by his prophet, Ezekiel, ‘When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.’ Oh, what encouragement for us to press forward for the prize with resolution, so as to obtain “a crown of glory, incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away.”

“Your affectionate husband,

“WM. CORDER\*.”

“May 3rd.

“MY DEAR HUSBAND,

“I know that there are a number of idle reports published; but when we consider that it is by such reports those who write them get their living, it is a little excusable. Although no one would like to have all their faults and every error painted in their blackest colours to the world—pray be of good cheer, as we are not to be judged by sinners like ourselves, but by one who will pardon us if we repent. Look at the rich man and Lazarus. Let me beg you to continue fervent in prayer, and end them thus, ‘Thy will, O Lord, and not mine be done.’

\* The unhappy woman, to whom this letter is addressed, had by this time taken lodgings in Bury. He still manifests his anxiety to transfer his property to her, and leaves the arrangement to his wife and her friends. He looks with desperation to the result of his trial, when he speaks of the *inutility* of employing counsel because the evidence is so strong against him; this is more than a tacit confession of his guilt. His request that his wife would refrain from reading the newspapers may, in one point of view, be commendable; but he might have been actuated by the fear that she would there discover a full delineation of his character. It is worthy of remark, that however the public press may at times exaggerate, it stated no material fact affecting the moral character of Corder, which has not or might have been proved correct.

“ Write me a few lines every day, if ever so few—I am fearful you do not eat—I have left all to follow you—let me know what you want, and while I stay here, it shall only be to attend to your comforts: *God bless you, adieu.*”

“ God bless you,

“ Adieu,

“ M. CORDER.\*”

“ *Bury Gaol, May 5, 1828*

“ DEAR WIFE,

“ Were it not for you, my beloved wife, I could resign myself to whatever my fate may be; but when I consider of your distressed situation, it cuts me to the heart. I was, indeed, drowned in tears in perusing your letter of this morning. I should advise you to keep on good terms with all persons—it will be your interest and happiness so to do, should it please God for me to leave you in this troublesome world. With respect to our present correspondence, I think you need not apprehend the least danger: should anything improper be expressed on either side, it will not, of course, be allowed to pass; but as to our family affairs and endeavours to comfort each other, there can be nothing improper or objectionable. As an opportunity now presents itself to convey this to you, I must conclude, hoping that you will consider what I have said; and what a shocking thing it would be not to have a friend to comfort and support you after my departure.

“ God bless you !

“ Yours affectionately,

“ W. C.†”

\* This laconic epistle, in answer to the foregoing, is fraught with sound argument, Christian piety, and conjugal affection.

† Corder appears by this time to have discovered the secret, that all letters passing to and from him were read by the governor of the prison. Perhaps, had he been aware of this, when he wrote his first and second, he would not have used such self-condemning expressions.



“ May 6, 1828.

“ MY DEAR HUSBAND,

“ Do not let the affairs of this world trouble you ; I think the sooner they are settled the better, as it will be a relief to you as well as myself. I do not feel so happy when I stay away from you, and I have endeavoured to conform to come once or twice a week, as I fear it is troublesome to Mr. Orridge. I am a little more reconciled to my lot now, but cannot at present bear the idea of seeing you so seldom. I will try, at some future period. We have never been separated since we married, only once, for a day or two, and then, you know, a few hours appeared years ; and now, what is it?—but the Lord fits the back to the burden ; and we shall, I hope, be enabled to bear still greater troubles, if it be his will. I shall be so happy when my mother has let the house, as she purposes coming to me—I wrote to her last night. Let me entreat that you will not think so much about me—I have One to protect me. When I was in London, I could neither eat nor drink ; it then cost very little to supply me with food. I now feel a great consolation at being so near you, and I wish our friends were also near us. I dare say some of them will come shortly. The time appears very long to us, but it will soon wear off. Adieu, God bless you. Try and compose yourself—you would be surprised how I sleep : you have heard me say, if I have anything in the shape of trouble, I always sleep soundly—try and take pattern by me. You are very low-spirited to-day—but you know not what happiness awaits us both. Let me see to-morrow that you have profited by my advice—you will have a letter ready for me to-morrow. Did you want the tea-spoon I sent you?—it is not borrowed—I bought or rather paid for it, and Mrs. Kersey brought it ; she generally sends every day to inquire after you—you see you are not forgotten by all. I have not been to the Registrar’s-Office to-day. Adieu, God bless you once more

“ Your ever affectionate wife,

“ M. CORDER\*.”

\* What anxiety this amiable woman manifests for the temporal comfort of her guilty partner !—but she considers his eternal welfare a more than paramount consideration. Hence, she exhorts him not to be troubled about the affairs of this life.

‘ May 12, 1828.

‘ MY DEAR HUSBAND,

“I have it in contemplation to go to town; it appears, if I do not, things will not be settled to my wish. Do not think it is to alleviate my distress, for the only thing to lessen that, is to be near you, or rather near the place where you are confined, and to bring you every little thing which I think will in the smallest degree comfort you. By going to town, I think I shall be able to settle things more to our mutual satisfaction. In the meantime, let me entreat you to bear up with all the fortitude you are possessed of, and trust in the Lord, as he will be a husband to me, if he thinks proper to deprive me of you. Remember what a comfort it will be to me to hear you are penitent; 'tis that hope alone, at this present moment, which gives me fortitude to bear our separation. When, upon one moment's reflection, I think you are prepared to meet your blessed Redeemer, it gives me fresh strength. What a world of trouble this is to live in, and we ought always to be prepared to leave it at a moment's notice; but alas! how few of us fear the dreadful day, and, to our shame be it said, the greater part of our time is spent in preparing bodily enjoyments, as though we were to remain in this world for ever. I have made every arrangement for your domestic comforts to be attended to until my return, which, rest assured, will be with all possible speed. I will not leave you, on any account, if you feel the least indisposed, and, if I do, you shall name the time for my departure and return; believe me, I will be as punctual as business, my health, and the Lord, will permit. I feel at present better able to transact any kind of business than I shall be at any future period; every thing, I know, very nearly stands still without me, and my poor mother will be delighted to see me. I have none in this world to comfort me like her when I am deprived of you, nor does she care to live after me. I wish to comfort you both. I may, in some degree, be a comfort to your own mother, though she does not know me. Every thing conspires, I was going to say, against us, but no, for us; for, had this not have happened, you would perhaps, until some later period, have forgotten to prepare for death. Your mother and me are strangers, although relations: when we are better acquainted, I think she will not blame me for not writing to her. It must be allowed I was very presumptuous in taking her only son from her; but you returned the compliment upon my mother, by



taking her only daughter. It is supposed we were both in a very great hurry, but I do not think you repent; I should hope not. I must not say any thing in my own favour; my behaviour to you will best tell my sentiments upon that subject. Perhaps you wish me to say yes or no, but words are empty sounds; 'tis our actions and conduct towards each other which will best decide. Would our friends look upon things in the same light as we do, we were not blameable in their estimation. It was the will of God, and He best knew what was to happen: it was his will you should have a partner that would wish to make it her whole study to lessen your troubles, to comfort you in your present afflictions. Can you doubt it when you see I am supported by Him alone, to perform more than the duty of a wife? you have in me a friend with a feeling breast, who would not forsake you in your present situation. Every day I feel my trouble less, as you have such humane people around you: if I bring your dinner, it is instantly sent to you, and I am answered with as much kindness at the door as if I was come to pay a visit (comparatively speaking); which lessens my affliction, for I do not feel as I used when I approach the door. If I leave you for a few days, I know how you are situated; and if I go to town, you must write down every day what you wish to be bought and cooked, and it will be sent, but I think it will take me a fortnight before I return. If I go, address me at the \* \* \* \* \*. Adieu! God bless you. I hope you will look better to-morrow.

"Yours, until death,

"M. CORDER\*."

---

"May 12, 1828.

"MY DISTRESSED SISTER,

"It is with no small share of shame and confusion that I now presume to address you. I have several times made the attempt, but have been as often prevented by the unspeakable horror which seized my trembling frame. When

\* The writer, although she suggests the propriety of leaving Bury to go to London to settle her affairs, manifests her affection for her husband, by leaving the decision to him. Although she alludes to the possibility of *losing him*, she nevertheless seems to have gained more fortitude, and "hopes against hope" for a more favourable result. Her quaint expression, relative to the sudden manner in which they were married, is worthy of remark.

I consider, for a moment, my tremendously awful situation, and what severe afflictions I have brought upon my beloved wife, my tender aged mother, and my affectionate sisters, in fact, upon all my relations and friends, it grieves me much. I have to return thanks for your kindness in forwarding the provisions, (which I am perfectly sensible I am not worthy to partake of,) and words cannot sufficiently express the gratitude I feel for your kind treatment toward my injured wife. From that lovely woman, since the hour we were joined together in holy matrimony, I have experienced inestimable bliss, and found a tender, kind, and sympathising companion. Yes, my afflicted sister, her constant practice has been, and still continues to be, to administer such duties as are conducive both to my present happiness and future welfare; and, although the indiscretion of my past life has unfortunately brought me into this disgraceful prison, she has left all to follow me, continually supplying me with every necessary, and endeavouring to comfort me; and, were it not for the consolation I derive from her, my misery would be insupportable. I feel for her painful office, and constantly pray that God, of his infinite mercy and goodness, will bless, protect, and support her, and all who are labouring under this dreadful calamity, and I hope that this solitary confinement will be conducive to my spiritual good. May it please Him, whose laws I have so grievously violated, to lead me seriously to reflect upon my past follies, and the innumerable transgressions which I have committed, that I may be led to the only source of hope, the blood of the Redeemer 'Jesus Christ, the righteous, who came into the world to save sinners.' O! that I may be one of those happy number, although I am unworthy of the least of his favours; yet, since he has promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it, I am induced to implore his divine assistance to strengthen my weakness, and to help my infirmities. Let me entreat you, my dear sister, that you and mother will endeavour to collect fortitude. Remember our afflictions come from a good and gracious God, who is not only able, but willing to assist us in all troubles; a Being to whom we may have recourse, under all our trials in life; to Him we may pour forth our sorrows at all times, being assured that we have a powerful Intercessor in heaven. To conclude, let us join in prayer, earnestly beseeching that He will supply us with grace, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to illuminate and instruct us in the blessed paths which lead to the regions of bliss and glory. I think you had much



better decline coming to see me at present, as I shall be allowed so few minutes with you. I feel persuaded it will only add, if possible, to your grief.

“Your unfortunate Brother,

“W. C.\*”

---

“May 13th, 1828.

“MY DEAR WIFE,

“Your letter was delivered to me last night: judge what were my feelings when perusing the contents. At first the idea of parting from you was dreadful; but alas, when I began to consider that in a short time I must leave you altogether, the consideration was insupportable: yes, my dearest wife, I am now deprived of your society, and in a short space of time I shall be banished from you for ever. I mean when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality. It is a great comfort to me to see you bear your troubles with so much fortitude; and as you very justly observe, you can better attend to business now than at a future period; therefore I wish you to go by all means, and may it please God to prosper all your endeavours. In my present situation I cannot, my dear, assist you in worldly affairs, but it is highly requisite that some one should attend to them, and I hope those who are better able than you or myself will do everything in their power to promote your interest.

“I beg you will excuse my writing to you when you are gone, unless I find it necessary. I doubt not but you will return as soon as possible, but I shall name no time, as it is impossible to say what may detain you: let me know when you think of leaving Bury, and may the God of all mercies protect you!

“Your affectionate husband,

“W. C.”

\* In this address to his sister, the writer evinces a commendable disposition of mind, and laments the calamity which he has brought upon his distressed family and amiable wife. Surely the dark allusions which he makes respecting his guilt, could not leave room in the most sanguine mind of those to whom these disclosures were made, to expect any other result than that which terminated this awful catastrophe. It is, however, fondly hoped by some that the ingenuity of counsel, and what is termed “the glorious uncertainty of the law,” will thwart the purposes of Him who hath said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.”

" I have read a part of Dodd's Reflections upon Death, and promise myself much satisfaction from a further perusal of that and the other little book ; I have repeatedly read over those interesting volumes, and experienced much consolation. I wrote to my sister yesterday morning ; Mr. O. will hand the letter over to you. I have every indulgence which I can expect, and consider it a great favour that I am allowed to see you so often. Adieu ! God bless you.

" W. C.\*"

---

" London, May 19th, 1828.

" MY DEAR HUSBAND,

" I am at this present moment at Mr. \* \* \* \* \* ; I hope all your little comforts are attended to. Keep up your spirits, be fervent in prayer, and the Lord who raised the widow's son and Lazarus from the dead, will hear your cries for protection. I once more entreat you to look for succour to that source from whence you can alone expect to receive it. He will never leave nor forsake those who trust in Him, for He always tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. Adieu ! God bless you. I remain in good bodily health, but I have not yet seen my mother. I am to remain in town until the copies of the wills are obtained ; I am very anxious to see you ; but Mr. \* \* \* \* \* says I must not return until the business is settled, which cannot be done without the copies of your brother's will, and a copy of your father's will. I shall return directly I receive them.

" Yours affectionately,

" M. CORDER †."

\* The writer after expressing his regret at parting with his wife for a short time, manifested that conjugal affection, which no one can doubt he entertained for her—he appears, however, to have read *Dodd's Reflections on Death* to some purpose, for he reminds his partner that " in a short time he must leave her altogether."

† The copies of the wills of Corder's father and one of his deceased brothers, appear to have been necessary, in order to an arrangement of the prisoner's temporal affairs. It is most likely to this circumstance that the writer alludes in the letter of May 6th (p. 338), where she mentions the Registrar's office.



*“ London, May 27th.*

“ MY DEAR HUSBAND,

“ I am sorry I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you so early as I expected : we have only just received the necessary information from Bury and Norwich. Mr. \* \* \* \* \* spent the whole of Saturday week upon my business : he has written a letter to Mr. \* \* \* \* \*, and the answer, I am sorry to say, was not at all satisfactory, and very much displeased him ; but it is all for the best : he is determined to do every thing in his power to serve me and you. Mr. \* \* \* \* \* requests I will inform you that you are not to sign any receipt or papers, until you see him or me. I am not certain how it will be settled ; I think they will come down. Mr. Humphreys hopes you will not think he has neglected you, but the question you put to him he could not possibly answer. He is coming down before the trial (and of course at the trial), to converse with you upon the subject, and at the trial Mr. \* \* \* \* \* will also be present, if nothing particular occurs to prevent. I consider his coming down will be as much advantage to you as another counsellor, and perhaps more so ; it will be a very great comfort to me, as I shall then be convinced that everything will be done for you, that is possible to be done in this world. You will, on that day, be surrounded by my friends—I say friends, for they have proved such to us both. I am grieved to the heart at being so long absent from you, nor can I bear my trouble with half the fortitude I do when near to you, and have the consolation of seeing you every day, however short the time may be. At some future period we shall, I hope, meet to part no more. I dare say you observed the unfinished state my letter was in, which I wrote at Bury the last day I was there—to finish it was impossible. I asked Mr. \* \* \* \* \* this morning when I might leave London for Bury : he told me I must consider the business could not be done without me, and when I was absent the spirit of the affair would not have that interest. I have not been idle since I left Grove House : I rather regretted having left it. \* \* \* \* \* sent his furniture to-day ; he has a person in treaty for the terrace. Pray keep up your spirits. If you are constant in prayer, you will be happy. I think it very kind of Mr. Stocking to visit you in private ; it is a great consolation to me, and the only return you can make for his kindness is, strictly to attend to what he says. I fear being too late, as the postman calls.

Adieu, God bless you.—My dear husband, pray don't be unhappy, I shall not be long absent ; I think next Wednesday will be the very last day. Adieu, once more. All your friends in London desire their love. Believe, my dear husband, that I ever remain

“ Your affectionate wife,

“ M. CORDER \*.”

---

“ *North Hill, Colchester, May 23rd, 1828.*

“ MY UNFORTUNATE FRIEND,

“ Ever since I was permitted the solemn gratification of an interview with you in this town, I felt most tenderly and seriously concerned, more particularly in reference to your spiritual welfare. Deeply affected as I was (and indeed still am) with the awfulness of your situation, independently of the various incentives originating in the obligation and sacredness of my profession, I felt it my duty to wait upon you, with a view of imparting that instruction which the distressing peculiarities of your circumstances seemed to require : you will remember that my visit to you was altogether unaccompanied with inquiries relative to the tremendous charge which you will shortly have to answer. Such inquiries, I conceive, would have been premature, if not impertinent, in a *spiritual* adviser ; but as a minister of the Gospel, which usually addresses men in their natural state as *fallen creatures* and heirs of wrath, without distinguishing the peculiarity and degree of their guilt, I feel that imperative necessity was laid upon me to set before you Christ, the sinner's only hope—nor, indeed, have I since felt occasion to reproach myself for the feeble effort.—I know that Jesus declared in the days of his incarnation with his own blessed lips, ‘ All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven,’ and when he sent forth his servants, he commanded them to preach the Gospel to every creature ; they therefore made no exceptions.

“ Besides, I view your character and circumstances as being only a faithful picture of what my own *might* have been but for the ‘ preventing grace of God.’ If indeed, my friend, men would take a scriptural view of their own

\* The hint given to her husband in reference to Mr. Stocking, the Chaplain, is exceedingly opportune.



fallen nature—the hideous propensities of the human heart, which are alike opposed to laws human and divine, and if unrestrained by education, or rather uninfluenced by religious principles, are ever ready to concur in the perpetration of deeds of obscenity, violence, and even murder: I say, if men would take this view of themselves, they would rather give Him the praise to whom the merit of their escape is due, than proudly arrogate to themselves the honour of being better than others. Even assuming your guilt of the crime alleged, and for which you stand committed, I conceive that the most consistent men would feel disposed to commiserate your situation, although they feel compelled to concur in the sentence which rids the world of the murderer of the poor deluded, unfortunate Maria Marten.

“But, my friend, waving all reference to that tragical event, an event which the clearest and most unquestionable evidence attaches to you, but of which the *Searcher of all Hearts* has infallible knowledge, and who will as infallibly and assuredly punish it with his all-righteous vengeance and indignation—I say, waving all reference to this, you will, I feel persuaded, from the respectful attention with which you received the ‘words of exhortation’ from my lips at Colchester, bear with me, if, for a moment, I advert to your previous conduct, and which furnishes ample ground for what I now presume to advance.

“You well know that immorality, adultery, dishonesty, blasphemy, disobedience to parents, and other crimes the most appalling, have characterised your whole deportment from the days of your childhood. However, be assured, my friend, I do not advert to these with ungenerous or unkind feeling, but rather with a view of putting you in remembrance that if, after all, the crime of murder, and murder under circumstances the most horrid and atrocious within the remembrance of man, there will be scarcely any crime of which you have not been *actually* guilty—O, Sir, for a moment reflect! O, consider what you are, and whither you are going! and pray, O, ardently pray! if peradventure the Lord, whom you have so grievously offended, will grant you repentance and remission of sins. Your crimes, it must be admitted, are of the most awful description and the most aggravated extent; but the page of inspiration declares, that ‘the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin,’ and that ‘whereas sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound.’ The love and grace of the dear Redeemer know no limits—as the murderous

and unchaste David, faithless Peter, adulterous Magdalene, the dying thief, and myriads on earth and in heaven, can testify. I, therefore, with the most compassionate regard for the spiritual and eternal welfare of your never-dying soul, entreat you by all you hold dear, immediately to repair to the Fount that is open for sin and uncleanness (Zech. xiii.), and therein to wash and be cleansed, for if you are enabled to do this with a truly penitent and obedient heart, you shall yet find mercy (read Isa. i. 18. ; 73rd, and 203rd Hymns of the Selection in your possession). I do trust you are seeking forgiveness of your sins and the acceptance of your soul through the blood and righteousness of a crucified Saviour—that you are seeking instruction from the word of God, are diligent in prayer, and that your deportment is compatible with the awfulness and solemnity of your situation. In all probability, I shall never see you again ; still, if you particularly wish it, and it can be legally permitted, I will make an effort to be with you about the time of your trial ; and if you really desire any spiritual instruction beyond what you now receive, I will write to some pious minister in the town or neighbourhood of Bury. My unfortunate friend, adieu—may you be led to sincere, genuine repentance, and may you find mercy for the Redeemer's sake : my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that your soul may be saved.

“ Your Friend and Servant in the Lord,

“ M. SEAMAN.\*

“ To William Corder, Bury Gaol.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ *Bury Gaol, May 29, 1828.*

“ With all possible humility, I beg to offer my best acknowledgments for the tender regard you express for my

\* This is truly an apostolical address, and penned by one who was well acquainted with the character and pursuits of the person to whom he sent it. Some may be ready to conclude, that parts of it are pointedly severe, considering that the prisoner had not been put upon his trial. We, however, are of a different opinion ; and it should be recollected that the communication was of a private nature. The Reverend Gentleman delivered an appropriate discourse on the Sunday after Corder's execution, in the parish churches of St. Peter, Colchester, and East Donyland, in the county of Essex, an extract from which will be given in a future page of this work, and which is published by Mr. Piper, of Ipswich, price 1s.



immortal soul ; an inquiry, I feel, of the utmost moment and importance, which nearly concerns all the human race, but more especially one in my distressed situation—labouring, as I do, under all the agonies of doubts and uncertainties yet in contemplation. I am indeed surrounded with amazement and confusion. I dread a day which will at last appear after a short space of time, on which I shall be summoned into the tremendous presence of the all-wise God, Judge of the universe, to answer for innumerable transgressions. Vices of the deepest dye. I must, with no small degree of shame, acknowledge myself guilty of committing, to my inexpressible sorrow, enormous sins, merely to gratify the vain pleasures of this transitory scene. Yet, you must know, reports are very erroneous. I cannot forbear alluding to the falsehoods reported, not only as to this unfortunate event on which I now stand charged, but also to the indiscretions through the whole course of my existence. I do not advert to those past follies with any degree of merit to myself—no, God forbid ! but it must be admitted that they are now laid open to the scrutinising eye of the world in their blackest colours, and, I can with confidence affirm, with much false rumour. I hope you will not, for one moment, doubt but I feel the most unspeakable gratitude for your kind epistle, and likewise in taking a retrospect of the friendly visit you paid me at Colchester, at a time when I was suffering the most acute torments, anticipating misery insupportable—when I was glad to receive instruction from a minister of the gospel, which did in some degree alleviate my distress, when you plainly set before me the only atonement for sin, viz., the blood of Christ. In reply to the question you put to me on that day, I must tell you it was *prostitution*, in a great measure, that led me into the horrid paths of wickedness and vice. I must once more return thanks for those religious books, &c. presented by A. I.—all of which I doubt not came with a sincere regard for my spiritual welfare : I can only add, may you and him meet with your reward in heaven !

“I feel exceedingly obliged for your kind offer to furnish me with further spiritual instructions, but as the Rev. Mr. Stocking, minister of our chapel, is continually administering every necessary instruction, and constantly supplying me with proper books, I have no wish to see any other person at present, and should I at any future period, he has kindly offered to supply me with a clergyman from this neighbourhood—therefore, I could not think of troubling you to come to Bury. If I mistake not, on the 25th ult., a day I shall

ever have cause to remember, on which I was tortured beyond expression or conception, on that day, I think, I was naming your kind attention to some of my friends, when Mr. Postans, asked me if I wished to see you again; my mind being in such a state of confusion, I know not what answer I gave him. To conclude, may the God of all Mercies grant me speedy deliverance from my present afflictions; and may his divine grace assist my weak and feeble efforts, that I may not lose one moment in persevering towards the great work of my salvation, so that I may be enabled to press forward with courage and resolution for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: to Him be all honour, glory, praise, and adoration. Amen. I remain, dear Sir, with sincere respect, in the presence of God,

“WM. CORDER\*.”

---

“*Bury Gaol, 29th May, 1828.*”

“MY DEAR WIFE,

“I have complied with your request without the least hesitation, as I wish everything to be settled to your entire satisfaction. I have received a letter from a clergyman at Colchester, and a noble Lord called on me on Tuesday, who, I think, tarried half an hour, administering the words of exhortation: he is a very nice gentleman, and seemed much concerned for my spiritual welfare. I can say no more—God bless and prosper you. With kindest love,

“I am, &c.

W. C.†”

---

“DEAR MOTHER,

“Finding my beloved wife feels somewhat hurt at the manner in which the subject of my defence is treated, I am induced to present a few remarks. Although I am endea-

\* Corder, in this answer to the clergyman who last addressed him, does not directly acknowledge his guilt in regard to the crime with which he stood charged, but qualifies his expression by admitting that he had “to answer for innumerable transgressions of the *deepest dye* ;” and that he had committed enormous sins. He expresses his gratitude for the kind offer made by his friend, but declines accepting it.

† Corder acquaints his wife with the receipt of Mr. Seaman’s letter, and informs her of a visit which had been paid him by a Noble Lord, whose name he does not mention.



vouring to implore Divine assistance to cleanse me from all sin, that I may be ready for whatever the result may be, yet you must know it is our duty to exert our feeble efforts towards the preservation of both body and soul. Allow me to remind you that, when any of our fellow-mortals are seized with bodily sickness, medical aid is instantly resorted to, and every effort exerted to restore the patient to his former health; why then is it not as requisite to apply legal means towards the preservation of a criminal? Surely you cannot think I have done any injustice in signing my temporal effects, with a view that my injured wife should have, toward the support of nature, what little may remain at the event of this *unfortunate occurrence*, should it be God's will to remove me from hence. I am fully aware a small sum will remain, which is all I can return for the numerous instances of her kind attention to my domestic comforts; she is still exerting herself to the utmost to preserve both my body, and, what is still of more consequence, my never-dying soul, which is a full proof of her *tender affection*. I cannot forbear taking a retrospect of *Towns'* short, but friendly, visit to me, on the 25th of April, a day I have cause ever to remember. On that day I was suffering the most excruciating torture—torture beyond expression or conception. I found myself surrounded by my old acquaintance and neighbours, some of whom felt much concerned for my tremendously awful situation. I particularly observed poor *Towns*: he was most tenderly affected at the solemnity of the scene—he, as an heir of God, I say, an heir of God, being furnished with scriptural grounds from the words of that sacred Book, which declares, that ‘all who come unto me I will in no wise cast out;’ and again, ‘they shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them;’ and again, ‘He who has begun a good work will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.’ Those passages, with many others I could quote from the *sacred volume*, give me the clearest proofs of his (*Towns'*) election from the foundation of the world, or he would never have been led into those blessed paths which will take him to the bright regions of bliss eternal—to a glory, the fulness whereof no eye hath been, no ear hath heard, and which no mortal power can comprehend.

“I dare presume to say, that if you ask him he will tell you that his delight is only in the Lord; that he is more desirous for the increase of faith, love, and holiness, than for temporal happiness. My dear mother, this comes not from nature; we are all by nature, which is corrupt, prone to

sin against God; this is an infallible mark of grace—entreat him to pursue and press towards ‘the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,’ which exhortation you will find in the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, ch. iii. ver. 14. In reference to my own case, I am fully persuaded he felt concerned for my immortal soul; and I beg you will offer my best acknowledgments to him, as I feel it a duty, knowing that his visit to me was with a view of dispersing those gloomy clouds which hung so heavy over my head, and under which I was almost ready to sink. He made a further effort to impart instruction from the inspired page; but, alas! he was prevented from proceeding by my being summoned to depart to this place of solitude. It would be in vain to make an attempt to describe my horrible sensations when I passed the door of the house of my birth. Yes, words are infinitely too weak to express how deeply I was affected, and, indeed, I am still so on account of your deep affliction and of my half-distracted sister. It was at that dwelling, where I was taught by my best of parents, in my early days, the reward of virtue, and the punishment consequent on vice: at that time I was plainly in the paths of pleasantness and peace; but, alas! Satan set snares in the way, which deluded me into all manner of wickedness and vice. Were it possible for my tender father to see us labouring under our present circumstances, how would it have grieved his soul! I well remember his last words, which he addressed to me, and which could scarcely be heard. If I mistake not, that tender woman, Mrs. Baalham, was present when he said, ‘My dear boy,’—he would have said more; but, alas, he was prevented by the thread of life being snapped asunder. Although I cannot avoid shedding a tear, my dear mother, weep not yourself; but let us rather rejoice that my father is now enjoying the fulness of that glory just spoken of. Cheer up, and hear God’s word—‘Behold the *upright man*, &c.; for the end of that man is peace!’ Such characterised his whole deportment during his time in this vale of misery and sorrow: therefore, we may conclude he is now at those mansions of bliss unto which we are all hastening, where, let us hope, we shall meet, never more to part, but to sing praises to God for ever. This, you must know, my dear mother, is only a state of trial—God worketh all things together for good, we have no business to contradict his wise counsel. He hath thought proper to separate me from all that is dear to me on



earth, as a just punishment for disobeying his call. Yes he hath called me time after time with his mighty voice, but I would not hear. He has sent repeated messages, but I would not listen or understand, but turned a deaf ear to them all. I cannot help taking a retrospective view of my guilt and innumerable transgressions, and the many times I have attended his place of worship, merely to gratify the desire of my parents. Even since I joined in the solemn bands of matrimony, I refused to accompany my life's beloved companion to the temple of God, who never neglected to attend with a sincere desire of feeding from the gospel-truths, while I felt no need of such food. When I did go, during divine service, my mind was continually wandering with my wicked heart. O, what a proof of infinite mercy and love, or I should have been cut off! The dreadful sentence pronounced—'Depart ye wicked into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,' of which we have a description in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where Satan views

'The dismal situation, waste and wild,  
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,  
As one great furnace flamed: yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible,  
Served only to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell—hope never comes  
That comes to all—torture without end.'

One would think this would make the stoutest heart tremble; but alas! I have often read this passage with as much carelessness as if it was of no consequence. Now, let me rather fly from Satan, and return to Jesus, who is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, who has revealed unto St. John the Divine, 'I will give unto him, that is athirst, of the fountain of the waters of life freely.' Rev. xxi. 6. Let us now, with all possible humility, throw ourselves at his feet, and return thanks for making us sensible of his threatenings against sinners, at the day of his coming. Let us entreat that the rod which he laid upon me may have its proper effect, by adding strength to my faith, and seriousness to my repentance—that it may bring me to a true sense of the follies of my past life; and oh! may He make my faith strong, and perfect what is lacking in it, giving God glory, that I may look above the things temporal, which are seen, to the things which are not seen,

and which are eternal. May I not lose one moment, but cleanse myself before I go hence, and be no more seen, is the sincere desire and prayer of,

“ Dear Mother,

“ Your unfortunate Son,

“ W. CORDER.”

“ P.S.—Let us, my dear mother, bear our present troubles and afflictions with Christian fortitude—let us look to Jesus, and He will support us: He is full of compassion, and of great mercy. ‘The Lord is good to all, his mercy is over all his works’ (Psalm clxv.) Remember we are the workmanship of his hands; he can remove the present troubles which are sent to put us in mind that there is not ‘one that doeth good—no, not one,’ for we all have sinned. I am anxious to hear from you; but have no wish to see you under present circumstances, as you would be allowed so few moments with me, and that through iron bars, and at a distance from each other. I have no wish to see one of my friends, except my wife, whom I expect in a few days. I have received a very instructive letter from the Rev. Mr. Seaman, of Colchester, which I answered. A few days ago, a Noble Lord, living in this neighbourhood, called on me again, and was with me half an hour; he appeared to be a very religious gentleman; he imparted instructions which affected me so much that I can affirm I have since experienced the Divine influence working upon my stony heart, in a manner to which I was before a total stranger. I beg that the Lord of lords will continue to enlighten my understanding, that I may resist the numerous snares which Satan is continually laying to destroy me.

“ Adieu, my dear mother, adieu! May God lessen your present afflictions and bring you to his glory!

“ W. CORDER\*.”

\* It would appear that there had been some difference of opinion existing among the friends of Corder as to his employing *special* counsel at the trial; and this, no doubt, arose from a thorough conviction on their parts of the little hope they entertained of an acquittal. They were aware of the militating and almost overwhelming facts against him, and could not, from



“ *Bury St. Edmund's, June 4, 1828.*

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I beg to offer my best acknowledgments for the many instances of your kind offices to me on the 24th and 25th April, on which days I was labouring under the most acute torments, the description of which it would be vain to attempt, as words are infinitely too weak for the purpose. In reference to the former, I cannot but picture poor William to my mind, who felt so deeply and tenderly affected for me: he is now, I conjecture, in the metropolis of England, where he will find himself surrounded by the most alluring temptations—a place where millions of our fellow-creatures have been led into utter ruin and destruction. I sincerely hope he will escape *Satan's panoramas*: he will present to him his *intoxicating draughts* in golden cups, and conceal the DESTRUCTIVE DAGGER under a velvet robe—he transforms himself into an angel of light, and with his artful guile deceives the incautious, and allures them into his kingdom, which procured him the name of the god of this world and prince of darkness. In reply to the question you put to me, I can only say NO;—you will most undoubtedly understand to what I am alluding. Let us now fly from Satan; but I will first return ten thousand thanks to your kind wife for her utmost exertion (as I am fully persuaded such has been her practice) towards alleviating my tender mother and sister's severe affliction. Likewise present my kind regards to the remainder of your family, knowing they all feel much concerned for my un-

his own expressions, but be convinced of his guilt. The criminal, to do away with any existing scruple, in respect to expense, draws a parallel between a diseased person, and a person accused of an enormous offence, and submits that, as a *dernier resort*, every exertion should be used to save the latter from death, as well as the former.

The person to whom he alludes of the name of *Towns*, is the pious labourer who exhorted Corder, on the eve of his leaving Polstead for Bury Gaol, to study the Scriptures; this person was also a witness against him on the trial. (Vide pages 34 and 149.)

His attempt to assuage the grief of his afflicted mother, upon whom he had brought such an overwhelming flood of sorrow, is highly creditable to him. Well would it have been if her advice and his dying father's efforts to admonish him had been remembered at an earlier period!

fortunate situation. Let me entreat you to bear it with fortitude and patience. I particularly observed you were looking ill at the time ; this occurrence was in a great measure the cause. Remember our affliction comes from God, who made us, and he chastises, to put us in mind of our duties, which the best of us, I am sorry to say, too often neglect. For my own part, Satan caught me with his bait in my early age : I have since, till of late, to my inexpressible sorrow, made it my constant study to serve him with as much carelessness as if I had no Supreme Being who is continually watching over me, and who will assuredly punish vice and reward virtue. As we say in our daily prayer, “ thy will be done,” then let his wise counsel do what he thinks best. We creatures are all his people and the sheep of his pasture : then surely the Shepherd may do as he pleases with his own sheep. If he thinks best to cut the thread of my life by the laws of my country, let me hope I shall then enter upon a fulness of glory which is now beyond conception. Let us survey a speck of time in comparison with eternity, where I hope we shall meet again never more to part, there to enjoy rivers of endless pleasures with our blessed *Redeemer*, who made himself a sacrifice for a broken and contrite heart. He has dispelled those gloomy clouds of despair which surrounded me but a few days since, and has made the brightness of his *glory* to shine delightfully around me : yes, he has presented to my view beyond the grave far preferable delights to the vain pleasures of this transitory scene. Mây I still implore his divine assistance which I have of late felt in abundance ! may he continue to supply me with his grace to enable me to resist the great adversary, who is continually exerting all the craft possible to devour me ! The devil is constantly presenting his *poisonous pills* wrapt up in *golden leaves*, and he far exceeds our fellow-beings in the art of painting—he makes his counterfeits appear to our senses far more precious than the king’s coin. In many other instances he is ever trying to destroy us, to drag us into his bottomless pit, the idea of which is insupportable. May it please God to bring us to a sense of our transgressions ; may we escape this severe and eternal punishment, ‘ for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.’ His word declares, that ‘ he who offends in one point is guilty of all ;’ what deep need have we, then, of the Saviour’s grace to restore our wandering hearts to our forsaken *God* (who gave us our existence) : to subdue



the power of sin within us, so that we wander and rebel no more, is the sincere desire and prayer of,

“ My dear Friend,

“ With sincere respect,

“ W. CORDER \*.”

“ P.S.—If you let me know William’s address, I may probably write to him. Adieu, God bless you.”

“ To

“ Mr. John Baalham,

“ Polstead.”

“ Polstead, June 17th, 1828.

“ DEAR FRIEND,

“ I have been very much grieved for you, from the period I had the short but painful interview with you at Colchester; to have seen you as you were then confined, and recollecting to have seen you as I had before in the midst of earthly pleasures—pleasures I say, for they might have been so, had you not been unfortunately led away by the deceitfulness of that *wicked* one who is daily laying snares in order that he may lead men to destruction:—this reverse grieved me very much; but may the assistance of the Almighty be upon you and us all evermore, to rescue us

\* This letter was written to Mr. Baalham, the parish clerk, with whose son William Corder had been upon intimate terms, until the latter became the associate of questionable characters. At this period Corder supposed William had gone to reside in London; and his remarks upon the vices prevalent in the metropolis are worthy of notice, on account of the figurative language with which they abound. He talks about “poisonous pills wrapped in golden leaves”—“Satan’s panoramas”—and Satan’s “hidden dagger” concealed under a *velvet* robe, &c. It by no means appears that Corder’s morals were at all vitiated by his residing in London; and he has shown by his diabolical conduct, that not only the Devil in London, but a being in the form and similitude of a man, living in the rural and retired village of Polstead, can carry “*hidden daggers*,” and other deadly weapons, concealed, if not under a *velvet robe*, yet in a *velveteen* jacket, for the hellish and murderous purpose of destroying his confiding and unprotected lover.

“ I took the pistol from the side pocket of my *velveteen jacket*, and fired.”—(Vide Corder’s Defence, p. 285.)

from such danger. Repent, again I say repent, for the sacred volume expresses that ‘there is more joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.’ Sinner I say, for we are all great sinners, and offending our Creator hourly. I hope you will not consider it too much, in addressing you in the manner I now do, for I address you as affectionately as if you were my own brother; and indeed we were the same as brothers, when you were residing at home: and it was with tears, you know, that I took a farewell of you at Colchester; yet one consolation to me was I thought you appeared to be rather composed, and I hope you are preparing yourself for another world, where I trust we shall meet never to part again, where there are pleasures for evermore. There is no one can tell the result of the trial, yet I hope it may prove favourable for the sake of your dear and unhappy mother and affectionate wife. Should the hand of Providence rescue you from this charge, I hope and trust you will for ever live a true follower of our Redeemer Jesus Christ; but should He call you from those gloomy walls, within which you are now confined, I hope He will take you to his everlasting kingdom. Should it be your unfortunate lot to suffer for this charge, I trust you will bear it as our blessed Saviour did upon the Cross. He bore it with fortitude—trusting in God His Father: but what were His sufferings? He was nailed to the Cross, and when they even pierced his side, yet he said in his dying moments, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;’ and I hope he will forgive you your trespasses, and all of us. Our blessed Saviour says, ‘whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you;’ ask therefore, and pray, before it be too late. You have now an opportunity which I hope you will embrace, and lose not even a second in laying your prayers before him that is ready at all times to accept them, and to hear all that call upon him faithfully: indeed, William, I wish I had ability to address you on many particular parts of the divine and sacred Scriptures, but I hope you peruse them minutely, with eager attention and fond desire. I hope what you once talked to me, about a future state, is forgotten, and that your mind is quite the reverse to what it was then, and that you fear that dreadful and horrible pit ‘where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.’ I shall now conclude, dear friend, with a short prayer,—‘Unto God’s gracious mercy and protection I commit



thee ; the Lord bless thee and keep thee ; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace both now and evermore, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.'

" I remain,

" Your sincere and affectionate friend,

" WILLIAM BAALHAM \*."

" P. S. As you mentioned you would wish to know my address, I beg to inform you that I have returned from London and am residing at home with my friends—for I could not situate myself to my own approbation ; and should you have a leisure moment to write a few lines to me, I should receive them as a kind remembrance of our past friendship.

" God bless you, William ; adieu."

" *Tuesday, June 9th, 1828.*

" MY BELOVED HUSBAND,

" I hope you have not been uneasy at not receiving a visit from me this morning. I very much regret being deprived of the pleasure ; although the time allowed is very short, still it affords great comfort to both. In one of your letters wherein you speak of my kindness to you, you say you returned the same as far as you were able : all I can say upon the subject is, that you were to me a *kind, tender, indulgent* (to a fault) and *affectionate* husband : if I lose you, my loss will be *great* indeed. I will hope for the best. I cannot frame my mind to think of losing you : if were, I could not bear up with half the fortitude ; I darI not allow such a thought to take firm possession of my mind. Suppose I was to make my mind up to the worst—in the first place it would render me incapable of attending

\* This reply to Corder's letter of the 4th of June, was written by William Baalham ; and it is so fraught with faithful admonition and earnest exhortation, that we shall only observe that it redounds much to the credit of the young man who penned it, and plainly shows that he has not been the " companion of fools," as also that he possesses ability, as well as an inclination, to do good in his day and generation.

to your little wants.—Secondly, Great joy is as hurtful as sudden grief: you have no doubt heard the account of the lady to whom that sofa in our parlour belonged? She died in the arms of her friend, with excess of joy at being kindly received when in adversity, she having prepared for a different reception: it behoves us to prepare our minds to bear prosperity and adversity, sorrow and joy, with equal composure. I must conclude, for fear of being too late; but I will first assign a reason for my absence yesterday. Mrs. \* \* \* \* again came to Bury, being anxious to hear of me, as my aunt was very unhappy, and could not sleep for thinking of me. I expect she will send for me; but be that as it may, it was by her request these inquiries have been so frequent. \* \* \* \* is to go to \* \* \* to inform her exactly how I am situated. I expect I shall hear from her next week. \* \* \* \* staid so long with me yesterday, that she missed the stage, so I consented after tea to walk some part of the way with her, as she expected \* \* \* \* to meet her with the gig, supposing she did not arrive by the stage. We walked and conversed so long, that I did not think it prudent to return alone, I therefore walked four miles out, and accompanied them home in the gig, and slept at their house. I returned this day a little before three o'clock, but did not like to come to you, thinking it might not be agreeable to Mr. Orridge to be troubled at that time. I think it is my duty to study what time would be most agreeable to him, as he is so very kind. I called upon Mr. \* \* \* \* \* who is out of town, but expected to return to-day. God bless you, my dear, adieu!

“Your affectionate wife,

“M. CORDER\*.”

“P. S. I hope to see you to-morrow.”

“*Bury, June 10th, 1828.*

“DEAR SISTER,

“The supposition, my dear sister, in regard to the indifferent treatment of my defence, originated in conse-

\* This short address is a convincing proof of the great distress felt by Mrs. Corder, when from any circumstance she was precluded the opportunity of visiting her wretched husband.



quence of Mr. \* \* \* \* \* declining to give certain information, &c. pertaining to my little property which was applied for by my best friend, Mr. \* \* \* \* \*; the refusal of such information plunged him into much difficulty in arranging for my defence, &c. Mr. \* \* \* \* \* being mother's friend, caused him to suppose the subject was treated with indifference. I doubt not but mother would have done her utmost toward the support of my truly virtuous and much-loved wife, in case of a conviction, and my innocent orphan, should it be brought into existence. I must confess my fault in not consulting my only parent relative to the assignment; but the fact is, I found myself in a dilemma, and it was executed without due consideration: however, we cannot now recall what is past, therefore let us hope all will terminate for the best, as Mr. \* \* \* \* \* feels so deeply interested to alleviate my distress, that I am convinced he will act in every respect from the best of motives should his health permit, and nothing will be omitted in regard to the conducting of my defence—but the result of my case I must leave to Providence. I received a letter from my friend yesterday, and I regret that my mother's reluctance should have prevented his intended visit to Bury; what could be her reason I can form no conjecture. I beg to state, that I consider it a very great favour that Mr. \* \* \* \* \* should condescend to concern himself about me, under these unpleasant circumstances; it is not done with any view of gain on his part, but entirely through pure benevolence. This is not the first time he has served both myself and injured wife; no, my dear sister, he has made it his study to serve us in several instances.

“In reference to your intolerable adversity, I had, of course, every reason to believe \* \* \* was the cause of your silence; let me entreat you will exert your feeble efforts, and bear your troubles with fortitude and resignation. Let us consider our afflictions come from the hands of a gracious Being, who makes use of very different methods in bringing his people to subjection. I hope the present is to promote the work of our salvation, through the merits of our blessed Redeemer, who came into the world, and endured the most barbarous treatment, to redeem us from all sin. I must acknowledge myself guilty of the most heinous sins; but he has said, do not despair, return unto me, ‘I will blot out thy sins as a cloud, and thy transgressions as a thick cloud;’ therefore I must conclude, with the divine,

‘The Lord hath corrected me, but not given me over unto destruction; may he bring me to a true sense of my poverty, and lead me to the joys and triumphs of eternity!’

“As mother has such a particular wish to see her unfortunate son, I will endeavour so to act as not to increase our troubles, and hope she will do the same. May this find you and her improving in health and spirits! I shall prefer any time after this week for the interview, when she feels herself able to undertake the journey; you may desire to know the reason why I say after this week—therefore I will tell you. I expect my legal adviser, but I don’t know what day he will come. I am myself in good health, and feel much better in spirits than I have been during my confinement upon this tremendous and awful *charge*, the very idea of which really causes my heart to bleed. At some periods I have been in a most wretched state of hopeless gloom, but thanks be to God, to whom the merit is due, I feel myself much recovered. You may rely on it, that the principal part of my time is dedicated to prayer, &c., in order to prepare myself for the worst that can happen. Should the termination prove fatal, my constant prayer is, that I may be able to resign my body with all possible submission to the God who gave me my existence, and to whom belongeth all honour, glory, and dominion.

‘I remain, my dear sister,

“Your penitent brother,

“W. CORDER\*.”

“June 18th, 1828.

“MY DEAR HUSBAND,

“I am very anxious to know what progress you have made in your religious performances: the last book I sent you I wish you to read with very great attention, and not only once, twice, or thrice, for it will bear to be read repeatedly. Could you but commit one-third of it to memory, how happy you would be—with what resignation would you

\* This is the second and last letter written while in prison by Corder to his sister, in which he complains of some obstacles which had been thrown in his way, in consequence of the withholding of some necessary documents by his mother’s adviser.



meet the many changes of this life, and you would not presume to call yourself unfortunate! What are the best of us but frail dust and ashes? to such we must return. I never had a wish for my days to be protracted until now—and that is to see you truly penitent, and at the same time to administer to your little wants and to comfort you. I am not allowed sufficient time to converse with you, or I might, perhaps, be able to assist you to bear up under your troubles with more manly courage. O! that we may be able to endure with Christian fortitude every trial which you may have to experience, and sustain with patience and resignation whatever afflictions the all-wise Disposer of events may bring upon you. The intentions of the Deity in the trials he brings are benevolent; they are to be considered in the light of chastisements, which will, if properly improved, promote our highest interest. The greater our tribulation in this world, the happier we hope to be in the next: the poor man was comforted in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man was in trouble. How hardly do they who have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven; 'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' My dear, let me entreat you to lose no time, but be constantly reading and praying; it is from that alone I receive comfort. When you have read that book through as often as I have, copy two prayers—the one for grace to do the will of God; the other, a prayer suitable for a time of adversity. I hope you are not disturbed by your companions; they will not expect you to join in conversation when they see you constantly reading; if you have but faith 'as a grain of mustard-seed, say unto this mountain, remove into the sea, it will be removed.' Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews is upon faith. I wish to get *Blair's Sermons* for you; I will try and prevail upon your mother to purchase them, or I will procure them, as they will be such a comfort to you. Adieu, my dear! God bless you. Pray attend to what I say; you cannot imagine how you will be comforted. Oh! you will be so happy, indeed you will: if you sincerely repent, you will be pardoned. My mother prays night and day for you. Adieu, once more—I hope soon to see you, my dear husband.

“ M. CORDER\*.”

\* This is the last letter which Mrs. Corder wrote to her husband, and in which, after exhorting him to faith, repentance, and fortitude, she expresses her desire that he should have *Blair's*

" *Bury Gaol, July 10.*

" DEAR MADAM,

" The melancholy intelligence of your severe affliction induces me to think it is increased by your supposing that Mrs. Corder's adversity overwhelms her with dejection. It is, indeed, of a most awful and oppressive nature, but allow me to assure you I have the privilege of seeing her every day except Sundays; and the fortitude, patience, and resignation, it has pleased God to endow her with, is really astonishing, which very much alleviates my troubles. We cannot *predestinate* the result of my trial, but let us hope for the best; yet, in case things terminate contrary to our wishes, let us endeavour to meet it with all possible submission. Our Supreme Governor cannot err in his proceedings; he will most assuredly work all things together for good. ' Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?' The inspired writers have foretold and cautioned us against the days of tribulation, and reason will suggest it as highly necessary, otherwise we should be altogether ignorant of the blessedness of peace. It has pleased God to afflict us with a double portion of woe; but the Apostle informs us, the sufferings of this present world are nothing to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in that unchangeable state to which we are all hastening. I have found great consolation from religious instruction, and have read the whole of your excellent book, which I have now returned to Mrs. Corder, having had several others presented to me. With my sincere and unremitted petitions to heaven for your support and protection,

" I remain, dear Mother

" Your affectionate Son,

" W. CORDER\*."

" To Mrs. Moore,

" *Ealing Lane, Brentford.*"

*Sermons.* It appears that she soon effected her purpose; for we find that, four days after this letter was written, she sent a copy of the work alluded to, accompanied by the following note:—" Mary Corder presents this book to her husband, Wm. Corder, on his birth-day, as a proof of her esteem, and hopes that he may live to enjoy many happy returns of it." Unhappy woman! fallacious hope!

Corder completed his twenty-fourth year on the 22d of June.

\* This appears to be the last letter which Corder wrote: it



MRS. MARTEN'S DREAM, AND A SINGULAR  
COINCIDENCE.

It has been a subject of frequent remark, and we cannot help reiterating it, that, at the trial of Corder, no allusion was made by the counsel on either side to the dream of Maria Marten's mother, which imparted that the corpse of her unhappy daughter would be found buried in Corder's Red Barn—and which, as the sequel shows, proved a sure prediction. We understand that the learned gentlemen on both sides abstained from making any inquiry or remarks upon this subject, because they would not encourage superstitious feelings among the lower orders of the people. This is the reason which they assign for their silence, and we cannot help observing that to us the reason is absurd.

If the counsel for the prosecution supposed that the statement or proof of such a circumstance, as Mrs. Marten's dream, would have helped to establish the prisoner's guilt, he neglected his business by failing to adduce it; if, on the other hand, the dream had been such as would have raised for Corder one particle of scepticism or gleam of compassion in the minds of those who sat in judgment upon his life, the prisoner's counsel would have been equally culpable to suppress it. Forensic gownsmen care about the superstitions of the people!—Fudge. With due deference to the learned declaimers, and with great respect for their transcendent knowledge in legal lore, we cannot suppress

addressed to Mrs. Moore, of Ealing, the mother of his much-injured wife.

He uses his favourite term *predestinate*, where another more simple might have been employed. We have been told that, at one period, Corder thought and spoke much upon the Calvinistic point of predestination; nevertheless, it is not clear that he was a disciple of the heterodox doctrine of fatalism, as some have reported of him.

our opinion, that cares like these never lurk beneath their gracefully curled wigs. Supposing that the subject of this dream had been inquired into before the Petit, as we know it was before the Grand Jury, is it to be imagined that a belief in the preternatural origin of dreams would have found a single convert from the most active use that the most ingenious advocate could have made of the poor woman's prepossession, when it was so naturally and palpably ascribable to the course of her waking suspicions\*?

The statement, however, that such a dream had occurred to the stepmother of Maria Marten has led to a communication being made by a person of unquestionable veracity, which is so remarkable a coincidence with the sleeping vision of the humble cottager, that we cannot refrain from subjoining it.

The *acting* party in the latter instance (if a dream can be called an action) is also now alive, and the parties to whom he made the particulars known

\* The compiler of this history had frequent conversations with Mrs. Marten relative to these dreams, when she uniformly persisted in the truth of the statement made at the Coroner's Inquest. She admitted that Corder, Maria, and the Red Barn occupied many of her waking thoughts, and became a topic of daily conversation. She says that, although she considered the circumstances connected with the departure and long absence of Maria appeared very mysterious, the idea of murder never crossed her mind until she dreamed of it one night a little before Christmas last; but she did not tell her husband of it, because he was extremely faithless in regard to matters of this sort. In the month of February, she dreamed again that she saw Corder murdering Maria, and that he afterwards buried her in the Red Barn. She now felt very uneasy, and told her husband of the presentiment which occupied her mind, and the reason of its existence. Old Thomas Marten appears after all to be sceptical, but he certainly mentioned his wife's dream frequently to several respectable persons in the village, long before he went to the Barn to make search—and to this search he was almost goaded by the daily importunity of his wife. He went at length to the spot, and the fatal discovery which he made is well known to our readers.—Vide page 8.



at the time, are also living. The subject matter of the visitation was connected with, or rather corresponded with that of a catastrophe at once so memorable and so shocking as to be still imprinted on the mind of every one in the kingdom; and the dream itself was no less striking, from the singular conformity of its details to those of a *contemporaneous tragedy* which was performed nearly three hundred miles from the person of the dreamer. This will no doubt be unaccountable to those who fancy that they theorize upon dreams by assuming an insight into the ways of an inscrutable Providence, who, if it seemeth him good, can exercise this faculty of the mind for purposes of warnings, remedies, discoveries, &c.

The following is the interesting narrative to which we have already, by a few prefatory remarks, drawn the attention of our readers.

“ In the night of the 11th of May, 1812, Mr. Williams, of Scorrier House, near Redruth, Cornwall, awoke his wife, and, exceedingly agitated, told her that he had dreamt that he was in the lobby of the House of Commons, and saw a man shoot, with a pistol, a gentleman who had just entered the lobby, who was said to be the Chancellor; to which Mrs. Williams naturally replied, that it was only a dream, and recommended him to be composed and go to sleep as soon as he could. He did so, but shortly afterwards he again awoke her, and said that he had had the same dream a second time, whereupon she observed that he had been so agitated with his former dream, that she supposed it dwelt upon his mind, and begged him to try to compose himself and go to sleep, which he did.

“ A third time the same vision was repeated, upon which, notwithstanding her intreaties that he would lie quiet and endeavour to forget it, he arose about

two o'clock in the morning and dressed himself. At breakfast the dreams were the sole subject of conversation, and in the forenoon Mr. Williams went to Falmouth, where he related the particulars of all of them to his acquaintance whom he met on that day. On the following day, Mr. Tucker, of Trematon Castle, accompanied by his wife, (daughter of Mr. Williams,) went to Scorrier House on a visit, and arrived about dark. Immediately after the first salutations on their entering the parlour, where Mr., Mrs., and Miss Williams were sitting, Mr. Williams began to relate to Mr. Tucker the circumstance of his dreams, and Mrs. Williams observed to Mrs. Tucker, her daughter, laughingly, that her father would not even suffer Mr. Tucker to be seated before he told him of his nocturnal visitation : on the statement of which, Mr. Tucker observed that it would do very well for a dream to have the Chancellor in the lobby of the House of Commons, but that he would not be found there in reality ; and Mr. Tucker then asked his father-in-law what sort of a man he appeared to be, when Mr. Williams described him very minutely : to which Mr. Tucker replied, ‘ Your description is not at all that of the Chancellor, but is certainly exactly like that of Mr. Perceval, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and (said he) although he has been to me the greatest enemy I have ever met with through life, for a supposed cause which had no foundation in truth (or words to that effect), I should be exceedingly sorry to hear of his being assassinated, or of any injury of the kind happening to him.’

“ Mr. Tucker then inquired of Mr. Williams if he had ever seen Mr. Perceval, who answered in the negative ; nor had he ever written to him, either upon public or private business, and denied that he had ever been in the lobby of the House of Commons in the course of his life. At this moment



Mr. Williams and Mr. Tucker, who were still standing, heard a horse gallop to the door of the house, and immediately afterwards Mr. Michael Williams, of Trevince, (one of the Williams's of Scorrier) entered the room, and said he had galloped out from Truro, (which is seven miles from Scorrier,) he having seen a gentleman there who had come, by that evening's mail, from town, and who said that he was in the lobby of the House of Commons on the evening of the 11th, when a man, named Bellingham, and shot Mr. Perceval ; and that as it might occasion some ministerial changes, and affect Mr. Tucker's political friends, he had come out as fast as he could to make him acquainted with it, having heard, at Truro, that he had passed through that place in the afternoon on his way to Scorrier.

“ After the astonishment which this intelligence created had subsided, Mr. Williams described most particularly the appearance of the dress of the man that he saw in his dream fire the pistol, in like manner as he had before described Mr. Perceval. About six weeks afterwards, Mr. Williams, having business in town, went, accompanied by a friend, to the House of Commons, where, as we have already mentioned, he had never before been. Immediately on his arriving at the steps at the entry of the lobby, he said, ‘ This place is distinctly within my recollection, in my dream, as any room in my own house.’ He then pointed out the exact spot where Bellingham stood when he fired, and which Mr. Perceval had reached when he was struck by the ball and fell. The dress both of Mr. Perceval and Bellingham agreed with the description given by Mr. Williams, even to the most minute particular \*.”

\* For an account of the life, trial, and execution of Bellingham the assassin, vide Kelly's *Newgate Calendar*, vol. iii. p. 393.

## THE TOWN OF BURY.

The handsome borough and market town of Bury St. Edmund's, the metropolis of the western division of the county of Suffolk, is situated in the hundred of Thingoe, twenty-six miles N.W. of Ipswich, and seventy-four and a half N.E. by N. from London. It stands on the west side of the river Bourne, or Lark, having a beautifully inclosed country on the south and south-west, and on the north and north-west pleasant fields, which extend to the junction with the county of Norfolk. From its beauty and salubrity it has been denominated the Montpellier of England \*. Occupying a rising ground and sandy soil, the streets are always clean. It is divided into two parishes, St. James's and St. Mary's, and is governed by a Recorder and twelve corporate burgesses, one of whom is annually chosen alderman, and acts as chief magistrate. Six others are assistant justices, and one holds the office of Coroner. The remainder of the body corporate consists of twenty-four common-councilmen; and these thirty-six persons *only*, return two members to Parliament.

The Angel Inn, one of the most conspicuous buildings in the town, stands on the west side of Angel Hill, and nearly opposite the beautiful entrance to the Abbey. The vaults underneath this Inn are very spacious, and it is supposed formerly belonged to the Abbey, from whence there was a subterraneous communication with this elegant establishment.

We cannot leave Bury St. Edmund's without making honourable mention of a gentleman, who once was the proprietor of this Inn, and who is, to

\* For an interesting account of this town and its environs, vide Dugdale's British Traveller, vol. iv. p. 281



the present moment, its *substantial prop* and daily visiter; the compiler of this work, in addition to the anecdote he is about to record, evincing this gentleman's loyalty, is aware of numerous instances wherein his unostentatious and disinterested charity has been displayed,—a convincing proof that to FEAR GOD, to HONOUR THE KING, and to meliorate the miseries incident to humanity, are necessarily component parts of “the highest style of man”—the true Christian.

The little narrative to which we allude is this:—In the year 1816, an outrageous mob assembled, and a riot took place in the Isle of Ely; in consequence of which soldiers were ordered upon their route from Norwich, Ipswich, and Colchester. Those who marched from Colchester, had to pass through Bury, and the fraction of an infantry regiment who had but lately returned from the Peninsular war, arrived by a forced march of thirty miles, at a late hour of the day; and such was the urgency of the case, that the commanding officer, notwithstanding the jaded state of the men, gave orders for the bugle to sound its “marching” strains at three o'clock on the following morning\*. Mr. Boldero, (the gentleman alluded to,) beholding the fatigue of both officers and men, immediately became a *volunteer* and *enlisted* himself in the service of his Majesty, by offering to convey the officers in coaches and the soldiers in waggons, to the place where their route was destined to terminate. This patriotic offer of course was gladly accepted by the commander, and during the short period of halting, neither officers nor men had to repent that they

\* The private soldiers, in addition to their fatigue, felt a considerable reluctance at having to go to quell the discontents of their own countrymen immediately on their return from a foreign warfare; and at the time Mr. Boldero tendered his services, the report was that the previous troops had been overpowered by the mob.

*pitched their tent* on "Angel Hill\*." It need scarcely be said that the plan of the evening was executed on the following morning.

This genuine proof of real patriotism was made known to his Majesty's Government, and shortly afterwards his Grace the Duke of Grafton, the (then) Lord Lieutenant of the county, called upon Mr. Boldero to thank him. Major-General Sir John Byng, who had the command of the soldiers, also transmitted a copy of a letter written by Lord Sidmouth, complimentary upon the subject.

The following is a verbatim copy of his Lordship's letter:—

*" Whitehall, 27th June, 1816.*

" SIR,

" After the representations which have been made to me, of the conduct of Mr. Boldero, who keeps a principal Inn in Bury, in providing extraordinary facilities for the expeditious conveyance of the officers and troops passing through that place to the Isle of Ely, during the late disturbances there, I cannot feel satisfied without requesting that you will have the goodness to assure Mr. Boldero of the just sense entertained by his Majesty's Government, of the public spirit which he manifested, and the valuable assistance which he afforded on that occasion.

" I have the honour to be,

" Sir,

" Your most obedient humble Servant,

" SIDMOUTH."

" To

" Major-General Sir John Byng, K.C.B."

\* We make no further remark upon this proof of genuine loyalty, except a quotation from Pope:

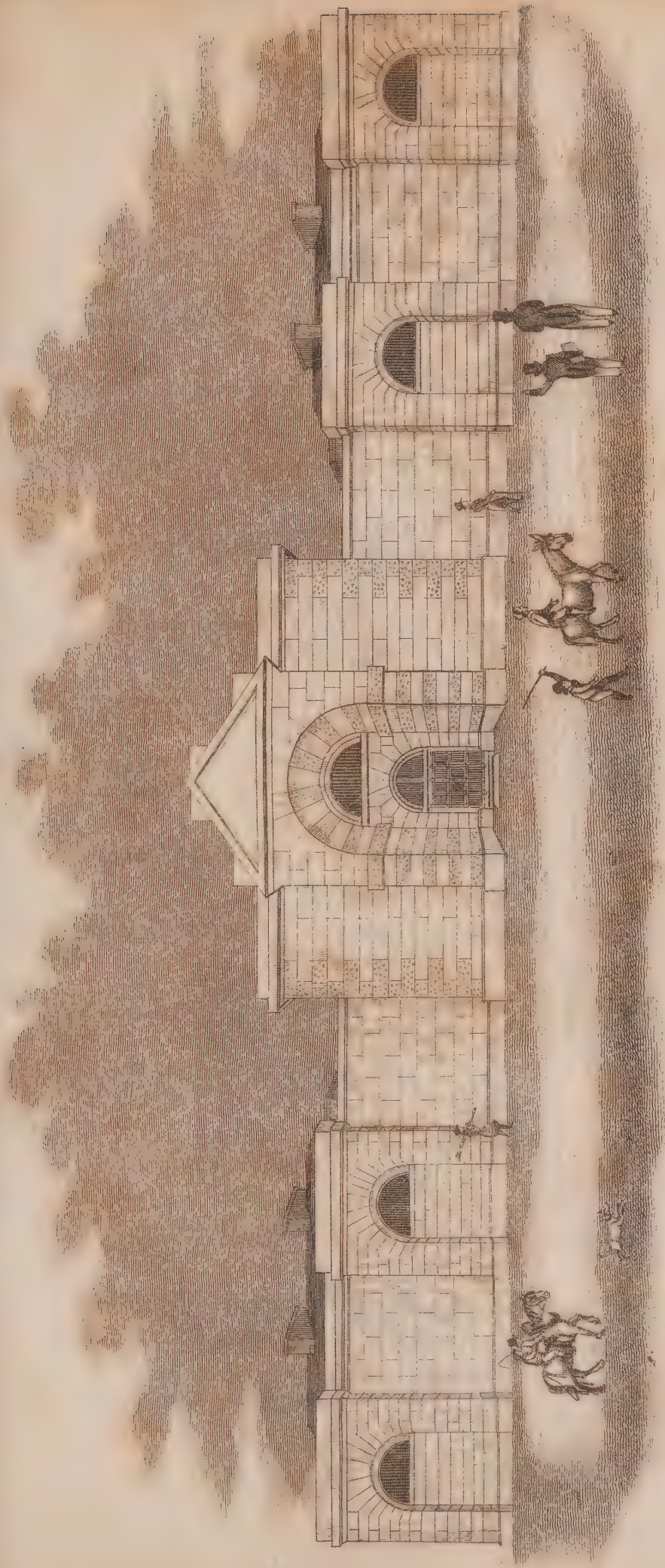
" A wit's a feather and a chief's a rod,  
An honest man's the noblest work of God."



## BURY GAOL.

About a mile from the centre of the town of Bury St. Edmund's, stands the County Gaol, upon an eminence on the road leading to Sudbury, and which, perhaps, as a receptacle for the unfortunate debtor and suspected felon, possesses, in point of situation, construction, and management, every other building of the same description and dimensions in the United Kingdom. Mr. Fowell Buxton, who in early life directed his senatorial exertions and splendid abilities to the important subject of prison discipline, and upon which he published a popular pamphlet, bears ample testimony to the truth of the above observation. As this prison has been so frequently alluded to, and its governor so often named in the course of this narrative, we conceive that it will neither be irrelevant to the tenor of this history, nor ungrateful to the taste of our readers, to give a succinct account of this popular building, and at the same time to remark upon the regulations by which its inmates are governed.

This gaol, which has a neat stone front wrought in rustic, was completed in 1805. The buildings are inclosed by a boundary wall, twenty feet high, of an irregular octagon form, the diameter being two hundred and ninety-two feet each, and the other four seventy feet and a half. The entrance is the turnkey's lodge, the roof of which is flat, and appears to have been *intended* as the place of execution of criminals, but is not at present used for that melancholy purpose. The keeper's house, also an irregular octagonal building, is situated in the centre of the prison, raised six steps above the level of the other buildings, and so placed that all the courtyards, as well as the entrance to the gaol, are under constant inspection. The prison consists of four wings, sixty-nine feet by thirty-two; three of these



FRONT VIEW OF BURY GOAL.

*London, Published by T. Kelly, Paternoster Row Sept. 13. 1822.*





are divided by a partition wall along the centre, and the fourth is parted into three divisions—by which means the different classes of prisoners are cut off from all communication with each other. The chapel is in the centre of the keeper's house, up one pair of stairs; stone galleries lead to it from the several wings, and it is partitioned off, so that each class are separated in like manner as in the prison.

In the early part of the year 1819 the magistracy of the county came to a resolution at the Quarter-Sessions to have the prison enlarged by some addition to the new building, in order to facilitate the important object of giving employment to the respective prisoners, and an eminent architect was applied to for plans of the projected improvements and superintend their execution. This gentleman observes: "I was necessarily drawn into a communication with Mr. Orridge the governor, and I was not long in discovering that I had *only* to adapt his preconceived notions of the nature and extent of the intended improvements to the localities of the prison, and to propose some *slight* difference of arrangement suggested by my better knowledge of building."

The prison is divided into nine departments, each of which has its distinct day-rooms, work-rooms, and sleeping cells. They are calculated for the confinement and employment of

- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1st. Master's side, debtors.    | 6th. Males for trial for petty  |
| 2d. Common side, debtors.       | offences.                       |
| 3d. Males convicted of petty    | 7th. Female felons for trial.   |
| offences.                       | 8th. Female debtors.            |
| 4th. Male convicts.             | 9th. King's evidence, and occa- |
| 5th. Males for trial on charges | sionally males confined         |
| of felony                       | for slight offences.            |

These were the departments into which the prison, as at first erected, was divided. The improvements and additions embrace Infirmaries for both sexes, a division for juvenile male offenders,



and another for the security and instruction of culprits of the other sex, who are thus separated from those confined in the House of Correction, and by this means they are brought more under the immediate *surveillance* of the Governor.

In addition to other detached buildings, is the Mill-house, which gives employment to those who have been convicted of minor offences, and sentenced to labour and imprisonment.

This kind of prison discipline, we consider calculated to produce the most beneficial results, as it has been found to be conducive to the health and morals of the prisoners, and it also induces habits of industry \*. Mr. Orridge has frequently been examined before the Committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons, upon the subject of prison discipline, and the increase of crime: and not unfrequently has he been called upon to attend com-

\* The tread-mill originated with Mr. Orridge.—This intelligent gentleman appears to have devoted the greater part of his life to the study of prison discipline, &c. Having considered the manner by which the Chinese draw water, he was led to suggest a plan upon their principle with a view to the erection of a tread-mill.—Mr. Orridge frequently submitted his plan to the magistrates of the county, and pointed out how it was adapted to produce a dread of punishment; and, moreover, the pecuniary benefits which would eventually arise, if it was carried into effect.

For more than two years the magistrates appear to have considered the proposed plan, as the mere chimera of the Governor's fertile mind, who, to use the words of one of them, was always inventing some hobby-horse or other; but at length Mr. Orridge obtained permission to consult an engineer upon the eligibility of his plan, and for this purpose he went to Mr. Cubitt, of Ipswich. The result was that the tread-mill was erected in the prison, and the plan has been adopted throughout the United Kingdom. There is no doubt that many idle and dissolute prisoners curse the inventor in their hearts; but the greater part of the *treading* gentry content themselves by punning upon the labour which they cannot avoid. The *accomplished* treaders at Brixton call the machine "Orridge's vertical care-grinder," and sometimes they dub it "Cubitt's anti-rheumatic wheel."

mittees of county magistrates, respecting plans of gaols, &c. \*

Mr. Fowell Buxton had many interviews with Mr. Orridge, upon the subject of plans for prisons, and the requisites for such buildings; one of which appeared so unique, that by special desire a model was executed of it for Alexander, the late Emperor of Russia.

In his work entitled "*A Description of the Gaol at Bury St. Edmund's*," dedicated to the Duke of Grafton, the then Lord Lieutenant of the county, the writer makes many sensible remarks upon prison discipline, from which we subjoin the following extracts.

"With regard to morals: It is well known that a combined system of classification, inspection, and employment, ensures and improves the moral character of prisoners; every consideration and attention have therefore been given by the magistrates to these important objects, and experience proves that they have not been given without considerable success. . . . Upon an average, not more than one in twenty of the prisoners charged with felonies, have, after their enlargement, returned a second time to confinement.

"I strictly prohibit unnecessary clamour, and endeavour, by every possible means, to prevent any tippling, gambling, swearing, or singing; the silent order resulting from these precautions produces reflection, and leads to reading, or a desire in the ignorant to learn to read, and be set to work.

"In the separation of prisoners I have always considered it the best mode to class them, as much as possible, by their character and conduct, and not by the crimes they may have committed or stood charged with; as, for instance, a notorious bad character is frequently committed for a petty offence: to place him among petty offenders is to subject them

\* The gaol at Carlisle, in the County of Cumberland, was built entirely upon the plan laid down by Mr. Orridge; and the magistrates, as an acknowledgment of their obligations to his great talents, appointed his son as the Governor of the new edifice; and we understand that the young gentleman is treading in the steps of his respected parent.—Ed.



all to be corrupted—he should therefore be classed with the worst characters. On the other hand, a person of respectable habits, and unhardened in guilt, may be charged with an atrocious offence—he should be classed with the petty offenders.

“A governor of a prison will very soon discover the character and disposition of his prisoner, and be enabled to class him accordingly. I also deem it important that every prisoner should sleep by himself; but if that cannot be effected, I then recommend that three should be placed together, having had reason to apprehend that evil arises if only two sleep in a room.”

Far be it from us to draw invidious comparisons; but, without the danger of incurring that charge by gentlemen who hold situations of great trust and responsibility, similar to that of Mr. Orridge, we can say that he is equalled by few, and surpassed by none, in humanity, intelligence, and the prompt discharge of his important functions. Many there are who consider the situation of governor of a county gaol as a snug sinecure, never reflecting that the obligations and duties of those who hold it are ramified almost in a ten-fold degree. Primarily, a gaoler has to find good and sufficient bondsmen, and his first care is to guard their interest as well as his own. He is expected to behave courteously to the sheriffs and magistrates of the county, whose servant he nominally is, and has not unfrequently to receive rebukes and hear complaints which sometimes are as severe as they may be undeserved; yet he is not bound to succumb, but should manifest that firmness and consistency of character which always result from a conscientious discharge of a public duty,—if he becomes a time-server and is guilty of tergiversation, and bends with a mean compliance to every magisterial command, a thousand to one but he is ruined\*.

\* When the jury returned into Court with their verdict against Corder, Mr. Orridge was busy in obeying the orders of the

A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF SEVERAL  
EXTRAORDINARY MURDERS COMMITTED  
IN THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK.

Within the last forty years some very strange murders have been committed in the county of Suffolk.

The last person hanged for murder in this county was a man named Thrower; and his conviction and execution took place in 1811, twenty-one years after the murder was perpetrated. Thrower murdered an old man and his grand-daughter at a place called Chatfield Bridge. He beat their brains out with a hammer, which he had borrowed of a man named Head. He and Head were afterwards transported, and in the year 1811, when the murder of the Marr family in East Smithfield was the general topic of conversation, some suspicion fell on Thrower; but no one knew what had become of him for above twenty years. An Attorney at Chatfield named Williams, being in conversation with another attorney at Cambridge, on the subject of Marrs' murder, said to him, "We expect that a man named Thrower, who murdered the

sheriff in regard to the pistols and sword; and while thus engaged, he stood so as to cut off the view of the prisoner from the magistrates' box. One of this body, and that no less a personage than Mr. M——, a *clerical* justice, forgetting that he was in the presence of a superior magistrate on the bench, called out, with Stentorian voice, "Mr. Orridge, sit down." The governor regarded not the mandate, and the Reverend Gentleman, in a louder tone, and with a wrathful countenance, exclaimed, "Mr. Orridge, I *command* you to sit down."

To this "command" Mr. Orridge coolly replied, "Sir, I know my duty; I am obeying the orders of the Court; and when I have executed them, then—and not till then—shall I take my seat."

This little rencontre became a topic of general conversation the next day; and the good people of Bury scarcely knew which to do most—censure the clerical, and, as they said, meddling dictator, or applaud the well-displayed boldness of the intrepid gaoler.



old man and his grand-daughter at Chatfield in the year 1790 ; but we don't know what has become of him." The Cambridge attorney replied, that he had a legacy to pay to a woman of the name of Thrower, whose husband had been absent from her for twenty years, and he had learned that the man had returned to England and was residing near Swaffham, and the wife could not receive the legacy without the signature of her husband. The Chatfield attorney immediately went in pursuit of Thrower, and apprehended him for the murder near Swaffham, when Head came forward and confessed that Thrower had borrowed a hammer to "do the job," and that Thrower afterwards boasted that he had murdered the old man and his grand-daughter with the hammer, and had thrown it into a pond near the old man's house. The pond was searched, and the hammer was found. Upon Head's evidence, corroborated as it was by the finding of the hammer and other circumstances, Thrower was convicted, hanged and gibbeted. A man named Smith was hanged with Thrower for murdering his two children. Smith and his wife were both found guilty of the crime. They had actually tied up three of their children in a room, and two of them were starved to death ! The survivor, upon whose evidence they were convicted, was at the time of the trial reduced to a mere skeleton, having had but two potatoes to eat for the fortnight previous to the apprehension of her parents. Mrs. Smith pleaded her pregnancy after her conviction, and nine months afterwards she was executed.

A farmer named Nicholls was executed about thirty-five years ago at this place, who was convicted of the murder of his daughter, a girl about fifteen years of age. He lived at Fakenham, and sent the girl to a village to make a purchase. On her way home he induced his son to strike her with

a stake on the neck, and she fell down dead, and they threw her body into a deep ditch.

Roger Banstead, an opulent farmer, was hanged and gibbeted for the murder of another farmer near Briggs. Both parties lived at Lakenhead. Banstead had impounded one of Briggs's cows, and Briggs, instead of releasing it by paying the fees to Banstead, used to go every morning to feed the cow. Banstead was enraged at this, and he induced a boy in his service named Harper, to take his gun and to shoot Briggs as he was feeding it. The boy levelled the gun at the heart of Briggs, and the wound was fatal, although the murdered man was able to walk home before he expired. The boy Harper was pardoned by the king, and was qualified to give evidence against Banstead, and upon his testimony the latter was convicted.

Two men, named Sebble and Mays, were executed and gibbeted about forty years ago for the murder of Mrs. Phillips, a widow who kept a small farm at Haswell in this county. Sebble, Mays, and a fellow named Wiseman, went to rob the house. One of the men knocked at the door, and told Mrs. Phillips that her cattle had got into the clover. She went out to drive away the cattle, when she was murdered by Wiseman, while the other two robbed the house. He then returned to the house, and told his companions "that he had settled the old woman;" and they were so terrified, that they left the house without taking the plunder, which they had collected, with them. Wiseman left England and went to America, and the other two were taken up in a public-house in consequence of the one having threatened the other "that he would tell of his murdering old Mrs. Phillips." They were both hanged. Wiseman afterwards returned to England, but he was not prosecuted, and he died only about two years ago.

Betty Burrows was executd for the murder



of Mary Booty. The two women lived with a man named Stewart, at Bury; Mary Booty was his favourite of the two, and in a fit of rage and jealousy, Burrows threw her out of the window, and killed her on the spot.

It is painful to the reflecting mind to observe, when not only scriptural but scientific knowledge is universally diffused, or, to use a modern term, in this age of "the march of intellect," that, independent of the conviction of the two Dyons at York, for the murder of their brother and uncle, and of the young woman at Lancaster, for poisoning her father and mother, who were all convicted at the last Lent assizes, there have been no less than eleven persons cast for murder during the summer circuit, viz., at Bury St. Edmund's 1, Shrewsbury 5, Maidstone 1, Exeter 1, Lancaster 1, Buckingham 2.

---

#### THEOLOGICAL NOTICES OF THE FATE OF CORDER.

Such was the sensation produced in the public mind by the frightful turpitude of Corder, that not only the energies of the pulpit and the press, but of the stage also, were called into action to display the guilt of the murderer, to furnish an impressive lesson from the horrible catastrophe, and by exhibiting vice in her most hideous form, excite to virtue and moral rectitude.

A number of discourses have come to our hands, (and we have heard of others) which were delivered by Clergymen of the church of England, as well as Dissenters: some of these are so fraught with sound divinity and pathetic exhortation, that we

confess they excited our admiration. With regard to one of those sermons preached by the Reverend Mr. Hughes to the congregations of the two spacious churches at Bury, we intended at first to have only made copious extracts; but upon review of this elegant effusion, we were stimulated to apply to the author to allow us to insert a *verbatim* copy in this work. The result of our request will be discovered by the letter annexed, with which the worthy divine immediately favoured us; and we particularly recommend our readers to peruse this Evangelical discourse with attention, as any comment on our part upon its excellencies is quite unnecessary.

*“Horringer, Friday, August 29th.*

“SIR,

“You are at perfect liberty to publish my Sermon in the form to which you allude, as my object in printing it was to render more extensively useful what had been approved when delivered from the pulpit.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient Servant,

“GEORGE HUGHES.”

*To Mr. J. C.*

---

“A SERMON on the Power of Conscience, with an application to the recent Trial and Condemnation of WILLIAM CORDER, preached at Bury St. Edmund's, by the Reverend George Hughes, Curate of Horningsheath, on Sunday, the 17th day of August, 1828.

“To the Inhabitants of Bury St. Edmund's, composing the two Congregations of Saint Mary's and Saint James's Churches, the following Sermon, published in obedience to their flattering approbation and particular request, is inscribed by their obedient Servant,

“GEORGE HUGHES.”



## SERMON, &amp;c.

“As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,—Felix trembled.”—*Acts* xxiv. 25.

“The testimony of our conscience, that inward monitor, who faithfully pronounces upon all our actions, good and bad, is more to be regarded than the approbation or the censures of men. A remarkable evidence of the power of conscience is given in the conduct of Felix, the governor of Judæa, as it stands recorded in the text. Historians are agreed in describing this man as intemperate and licentious in his general conduct; well then might his guilty conscience accuse him, as St. Paul ‘reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come!’—As he called to his recollection the enormities of his past life, well might the governor tremble before the masterly exposition of his prisoner! The bare possibility of the reality of those awakening truths roused the feelings of the conscious Felix; but enforced, as they were, by powerful argument, with all the sincerity, all the authority of truth, possibility rapidly gave way to certainty, and ending in conviction, the declarations of the apostle smote the conscience of the guilty Felix, and he ‘trembled.’

“We cannot but admire the courage of the great apostle; though imprisonment or torture might be the fruit of his pious daring, yet was either to be preferred before the charge of indifference to the sacred cause of his God!—a lesson of moral magnanimity that may well be imitated by the present ministers of Christ. Before I apply the argument to those whom I address, let me briefly allude to some similar evidences of the force of conscience, as they are recorded in the sacred volume. ‘Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?’ was the exclamation of Ahab, the Samarian king, when reproached by the prophet Elijah. Conscious of the heinous nature of his crimes, conscious that he was deserving of punishment, having violated the commandments of his God, he instantly acknowledges an enemy in the person of the prophet, and foresees the vengeance that awaits him. So Herod, the guilty monarch, who, to prosper a forbidden passion, had caused the holy Baptist to be beheaded, (thus clothing the hateful crime of adultery in a more hideous garb, by making it the parent of

murder,) won by the suggestions of his alarmed and wicked conscience, when the fame of Jesus reached his ears, exclaimed, ‘John the Baptist is risen from the dead,’ and thought his hour of retribution was at hand. Again, in the instance of the woman taken in adultery, whom the Jews, with the hope of entangling Jesus in the snare which they had laid for him, brought into his presence for his condemnation. ‘He that is without *sin* among you, let him *first* cast a stone at her;’ their *consciences* could not stand the test of the inward scrutiny, and ‘they went out one by one.’ These several instances of the power of a guilty conscience eloquently illustrate the evidence of the text. ‘Almost thou persuadest me to be a *Christian*,’ was the conscientious avowal of king Agrippa, when St. Paul addressed to him his impressive appeal in a subsequent stage of the same accusation. Unhappily with the king, as with the governor before us, the impression was merely momentary; ‘go thy way for this time,’ said Felix, ‘when I have a convenient season I will call for thee;’ and the following verse records, that when the *momentary trembling* had subsided, the base hope of a bribe for his freedom from his persecuted prisoner, had greater weight with this unprincipled governor, than the impressions of his eloquent discourse.

“It might be supposed that when we reason on a subject of such tremendous importance, as the ‘judgment to come,’ you, like Felix, would tremble for yourselves. In the ordinary proceedings of an earthly tribunal, there is a solemn, an appalling seriousness. A fellow creature stands before his judge charged with a crime, to be followed, if proved against him, by instant death. Fearfully the prisoner trusts for his escape to the ingenuity of talent, to the generous construction of the law, leaning, as it ever does, to mercy. But justice, weighing in her impartial scales the probabilities of guilt or innocence, pronounces her sentence upon the prisoner: a few short hours are allowed him, wherein he may pray for pardon of his offended God—and then, an ignominious death! There are few who can witness this solemn proceeding without reflecting on the analogy it bears to the judgment-seat of Christ.

“The race of earth has now been run,—time and chance have happened alike to all,—‘the battle has not been to the strong, nor the race to the swift,’—rich and poor, the lowly and the great, are met together,—all earthly distinctions are forgotten. Man is before his heavenly Judge; his



condition to *all eternity* depends on the sentence now about to be passed on his conduct through time. His whole past life—the sins of every year—of every day—of every hour—the very transgressions of the *thought* and *heart* are arrayed in fearful hostility against him. No ingenuity of talent, if the sentence of condemnation be passed upon him—if mercy stay not the uplifted arm of justice, no exercise of power—no intervention of friends, can recall that dreadful sentence! Well might Felix ‘tremble’ at such a denunciation as this!

“But, my brethren, I will suppose that death shall find you humbled and penitent, and prepared for judgment; conscious of your great unworthiness, but resting all your hopes upon the merits of Jesus Christ. You are *tried*—and under those merits, you are *acquitted*—you pass from momentary death to everlasting life—you hear the cheering voice of your approving judge, ‘Enter *thou* into the joy of thy Lord’—you mingle with the spirits of ‘just men made perfect,’—and are once again, and to *all eternity*, blest in the society of those you most loved and esteemed on earth!

“It might be supposed that when ‘the judgment to come’ is the awful theme of our exhortations, you would instantly look into your own consciences, that you would ‘tremble’ as you dwelt upon the enormity and danger of sin—that conviction would instantly flash upon your souls—that your consciences would answer to the charge as if immediately brought against yourselves—that you would ‘tremble’ at the awful consequences denounced against some besetting sin—and that immediate reformation, following upon unfeigned repentance, would be the happy consummation. But no! with Felix you tremble as the word is sounded in your ears; and when accustomed pleasures prefer their more welcome claim to your attention, you borrow the reply of the irresolute governor—‘Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.’

“Here let me ask you, one and all, *when* will this convenient season come? The same truths have been enforced, the same punishments denounced from sabbath to sabbath, and this convenient season has not *yet* been found. The temptations of the Evil Spirit are renewed in the very moment that the impressions of the Spirit of God are wearing away. The reasonings on the ‘judgment to come’ are forgotten, and the hopes and fears of eternity are lost in the vanities and vices of time. But think not, that you have effectually stifled the suggestions and silenced the voice of

conscience. The serious warnings of the gospel will be remembered in the stillness of retirement; the reflections of the night will bring home to your memories the cautions of the morning. To how many conscious sinners are the terrors of futurity imaged in the convulsion of the elements! In those awful moments, when the lightning seems armed with death, the threatened punishments of sin wear a dreadful reality, and the 'still small voice' of conscience is heard even in the raging of the storm. Thoughts upon the uncertainty of life—on the 'judgment to come'—then bring in fearful array before you the gospel threats against impenitent transgression; your consciences 'tremble' as they pass in review before you, and repentance is the instant resolve. It is well, where the good resolution of to-night is not followed by its customary relapse to-morrow—it is well, if you do not again trifle with your best and dearest hopes!

"There have been some few instances of sin so determined, and sinners so hardened, that even a hovering death and a coming judgment have not been armed with sufficient terrors to force from them an acknowledgment of their vices, and a prayer for their pardon. Let your prayers ascend for those who pray not for themselves—pray that the compunctious visitings of conscience may recover them to their God: and in the happy hour of self-investigation fail not to 'reason' unreservedly with your own consciences, and probe the inmost recesses of your hearts. It is only in these moments of religious retirement that the inward man can be thoroughly known: 'the heart is deceitful above all things:' hence are you so repeatedly cautioned to pray to Almighty God, that he would make you a *new* heart, and create a *new* spirit within you. The heart is the root of sin—the heart must be reformed ere the life can be amended. If your course of conduct be such, as, with every allowance for human infirmity, your God will approve in the 'judgment to come,' how greatly soever your Christian services may be set at nought by man, you may smile at his blind and partial decisions—you may be unmoved by his injustice; you will have that within you, which bids you be cheerful though the world shall frown upon you, and patient under the reproach, though it may misjudge and despitefully use you. But, on the other hand, if your lives be wicked—if, in the awful retrospect of the past, there be no recollected endeavours after holiness—if your heart convict you, where man has acquitted you—if you cannot return a satisfactory answer to the searching question—does my own heart condemn me? you may



‘tremble’ where all seems fearless confidence around ; conscience will suggest alarm, where the world proclaims peace, and fears of the ‘life to come’ destroy the groundless consolations of the ‘life that now is.’ But to the righteous,—and I gladly pass on to this happier contemplation,—the voice of conscience is the messenger of peace ; it whispers consolation in the midst of suffering ; it tells of everlasting life when death seems fast approaching. It reminds him of youth, thoughtless perhaps, but not wilfully sinful—of manhood, that laboured to repair the errors of youth by correcting past follies, and teaching others to avoid them—of age making more perfect its repentance, and preparing for judgment, humbly offering its own acts of obedience, sincere but imperfect, as the foundation of its hope, to profit by the Redeemer’s sacrifice.

“ And now, my brethren, the considerations which have been this morning urged upon you, may be brought home more immediately to your own consciences. I am about to make an application to a recent judgment upon earth, which may bring your hearts to a serious reflection upon that ‘judgment to come,’ on which Paul reasoned before Felix. St. Paul, the eloquent apostle, by the force of his own powerful arguments alone—by the masterly skill with which he applied them—made ‘Felix tremble.’ We, feeble followers of St. Paul, gladly have recourse to every outward aid that offers itself to our attention—to strengthen the impression upon our Christian flocks. And an example is now within my reach, by enforcing which, I may have a better hope, that you who hear me will ‘tremble’ and reform. You listen, perhaps, with indifference to the detail of wickedness in the world—to the punishments it brings with it—but when the moral is brought home to your conscience—when you read in the conduct and fate of those around you, the reality of our admonitions—it may be hoped, it may be presumed, that the most beneficial consequences will follow on the strong and painful conviction. You learn that our warning cautions are given for a more important purpose than merely to adorn an idle declamation—to point an interesting tale.

“ The very recent proceedings of which your own town has been the centre—proceedings so awful in their character, and so serious in their result, that men’s thoughts have been wholly busied in them—that the curiosity of all conditions has been excited—these will at once attest the necessity of guarding the issues of the heart, and make you tremble for

the inevitable fate of those who live ‘without God in the world.’ To these engrossing thoughts, I am anxious to give a moral and a Christian direction. I am anxious to convert what may have been idle, unprofitable curiosity, into a permanent, substantial good. The fate of that miserable man, whose life has been forfeited to the offended justice of his country, is yet alive in your recollections; and it may be confidently hoped, your hearts are now open to a Christian impression—that neither his crime nor its punishment has been without its salutary effect upon you all. Much has been said, and justly said, by those who are most competent to decide on such a subject, of the great impropriety of indulging in such reflections, before the accused was brought to judgment, and while, however distant, yet a hope remained of a fellow-creature’s establishing his innocence of so foul a blot upon his Christian name. But now—now that a calm and dispassionate investigation has been made into the circumstances of the charge—now that the guilt has been, even on his own confession, unquestionably fixed upon him—now that a *scaffold* has been the closing scene of what began in the breach of a positive commandment,—now that our whole neighbourhood is musing upon the melancholy fate of the victim—the horrible death of her murderer—it is *now*, I would hope to be permitted, as a Christian minister, to point to a Christian congregation *where* sin found its origin—in what manner it grew to so dreadful a malignancy, as to close its career in a crime from which our human nature recoils. This is soon discovered. It began in the indulgence of sensual passion—it ended in the *destruction* of its object. It began in contempt of every law both divine and human—it *has* ended, on *earth*, in the most dreadful punishment those laws can inflict—*how* it *will* end *hereafter*, in the ‘judgment to come,’ is a thought too dreadful to pursue!—it would, indeed, be most intolerable, were it not chastened by the earnest hope, that *deepest repentance* may have awakened an interest in an all-merciful Redeemer!

“Of the many who listened to the condemnation of this most miserable sinner, what, I would ask, was the proportion of those who returned to their homes awfully impressed with the serious scene—more fearfully trembling for *their own* sin and danger—more distrustful of their own strength—more resolved upon their own repentance and reformation? If there be one on whom that man’s crime and condemnation, and disgrace and death, has failed to make the due impression—if there be one who can reflect unmoved on



this the last end of the sensualist—who heard without a secret misgiving the sentence that cut him off from earth for ever—to such a man I would say, Go, and witness the inconsolable afflictions of an aged parent or a widowed wife; think what are *their* reflections now! Go, idler! and see the end of all our exhortations—what it is we mean, when we tell you, the ‘wages of sin is *death*,’ and if the scaffold awake not compunction—if that terrific death of earth make you not tremble, think, oh! seriously think, upon that *second* death, which will be awarded to sin unrepented of and unforgiven.

“Let it not be the language of your fancied but fatal security, ‘I have heard these cautions without any misgiving at the heart; thank God! they do not apply to me; thank God! I am not as other men;’ but rather strike upon your breast, and pray that ‘God will have mercy upon you a sinner.’ Let it not be your boast that ‘you still are spared—still enjoy your health and strength—that when the days of youth are past, you will surrender yourself to graver reflections, and seriously prepare for the ‘judgment to come.’ Be not ‘slow of heart to believe,’ rather ‘tremble’ as you call to memory the scenes that have just passed before you. The repentance of a soul when life is in health and strength is acceptable to God; that of the last hour of life *may not be registered in heaven!* Mistake me not, nor imagine that man may presume to limit the mercies of the Almighty—but trust not to a reed that may not bear you. To-day, while it is called to-day, ‘harden not your heart.’ I would have you thus commune with your heart, in reference to the example under our consideration—

“‘How far removed am *I* from the indulgence of those impure desires that led to the commission of this very crime, the end of which I see before me? have I never so far forgotten my Christian duty? have I never broken the commandment which was the first step to this poor sufferer’s crime? have I never led astray the female heart? have I never deceived her by my falsehoods? have I never made light of Christ’s commands? have I never, under a crafty promise of marriage, artfully made and frequently renewed, have I never triumphed, guiltily triumphed, over female virtue, and then left her to her bitter fate—disgraced among her companions, and night and day deploring the confidence she has placed in my promises, and loathing the very mention of my name?’

“If ever there were a lesson held forth to the insecurity

of sin, it is held forth in this man's fate. Who can tell but it was his intention to repair (if we may use the term)—to repair by marriage that sin of sensual passion to which he had reduced his victim? who can tell what circumstances may have come between her ruin and her death? He, as *do others now*, had once, perhaps, intended what he so often professed; but his heart grew in hardness as it grew in sin; the object of his passion soon became hateful to him; to behold her was but to be reminded of his crime; her presence was a perpetual witness of his sin—a perpetual reproach upon him. What might deliver him from this bondage of sin? He had recourse to no counsellor who might have told him how to act; who might have pointed his attention to the path of reconciliation upon unfeigned contrition and repentance. He looked not to a Father's open arms ready to receive the returning prodigal. No! he wickedly resolved to add sin to sin; he wickedly hoped to find peace by the destruction of her whose peace he had already destroyed. In a word, as he had broken her heart, so he made her grave, and idly dared to hope that in that grave were buried with her mangled body all his offences, all his cares, all his troubles and anxieties! that the world would yet be a resting-place for him! that he would re-enter it on a par with his fellow-creatures! Here is the deceitfulness of sin. I pause not here to comment upon the wicked subterfuge by which his first crime was concealed; but oh! ye young of every condition, I hasten to caution you—from this dreadful example—to beware of the *beginnings* of sin, to 'tremble' for their consequences. The thunderbolt does not unforeboded fall upon you. The fair face of heaven is at first obscured; the clouds gradually gather round you; the darkness grows momentarily more terrific; the lightning awhile plays faintly, and the thunder rolls in the distance—but suddenly the death-stroke falls, and the creature is no more! So in the moral landscape—the fair face of innocence is first despoiled of its smile of cheerfulness and peace; the cares of life gather around her; daily her troubles become less supportable; dangers seen in the distance approach more nearly every hour, and then comes sudden—*instant* death; no preparation for judgment—no wedding garment for the feast in heaven!—I call upon you all, but especially on *you, young thoughtless man!* I charge you to think seriously on these things! Believe me, in the judgment of heaven, whatever may be the judgment of the world, the guilt of the seducer is tenfold greater than the guilt of the seduced.



—The world may condemn *her*, and let *you* pass by unharmed. The *world* may smile as you deal out ruin around you—but God knows who is the guiltiest! Not the deceived—but *you*, the deceiver! Not she who lends her confidence, but you who betray it!

“Let me give one last word of caution to you all—to either sex—of every condition. It is not *safe* to sin at all!—it is not safe to indulge a wicked passion, with the intention to atone your error, as *you* think, by an after-marriage. If you ask me *why* it is not safe, I send you to the grave of the victim for your reply! She left her home, as she fondly trusted, to meet her husband—she found her murderer! She hastened, as she hoped, to the atoning altar of her God—and met her early grave! I do beseech you to lay these things to heart while the opportunity is yours. If you are only on the threshold of sin—pause before you move *one* step further—that step may lead you downwards to perdition. Repent—reform—and pray, and hope to be forgiven, through the merits of the Redeemer.”

We have also been favoured with a letter, accompanied by a sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Seaman, a minister of the Church of England\*, residing at Colchester, which was preached at the Church of St. Peter in that town, and at the parish Church of East Donyland, in consequence of the conviction and execution of Corder. This is truly an excellent discourse, but too prolix for our columns. We have, however, given several extracts, which will doubtless induce some of our readers to purchase the sermon, which is sold by Piper of Ipswich, and Wightman and Cramp, 24, Paternoster Row.

The preacher selected for his text the following words from the prophecy of Isaiah, Chap. iii. ver. 10, 11. “*Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.*”

\* This is the gentleman who visited Corder when at Colchester, on his way to Polstead, and who wrote an admirable letter to him while in Bury gaol, which, together with Corder’s reply, will be found at page 345.

*Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."*

From this appropriate motto, the preacher, after a suitable introduction, considered, 1st. *The character, and the everlasting portion of the righteous.* 2nd. *The character, and the present and everlasting portion of the wicked.*

From the latter part of the discourse, which is more applicable to our design, we give the following extracts :

" The principles and the practices of the wicked will receive further exemplification in considering—

" (1.) *His present and everlasting portion.*

" Mark his *present portion.* He is under the delusive influence of sin. To the righteous, sin is as fearful as the grave, and terrible as death : but, usually, it assumes a specious character, like unto an angel of light, and calls evil good, and good evil ; and puts light for darkness, and darkness for light ; and bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. It suggests the perfect innocency of certain prescribed pleasures, and makes light of seduction and intemperance, as merely youthful indiscretions. It commands to live merrily, to promote conviviality, and to concert projects for imparting the richest zest to the things of this world. It may, indeed, permit an occasional thought relative to God, the soul and eternity, and not entirely forbid attendance upon public worship ; but then it represents religion as being a melancholy, gloomy exercise ; and thereby generates an indifference, as purely hostile to the existence of true piety, as any one principle of the natural man : and it consigns the righteous to a place among the weakest and the most enthusiastic of mankind. Now with these and numberless other stratagems, sin overcomes both the young and the old, and frequently seduces the soul into *consequences the most fearful.* I think I may venture to assert, that the late unhappy William Corder never for one moment, at the commencement of his sinful career, contemplated consequences so dreadful to himself and to others. But the most aggravated sins have been the results of small beginnings. An impure thought, an evil eye, an unchaste desire, if cherished, usually terminate in actual transgression. Thus every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed ; then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth



forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Sin is of so bewitching and leavening a nature, as soon to influence the heart into an entire concurrence with its wily machinations; and so stupifying is it in its tendency, that the man who becomes familiar therewith, to him sin does not appear sin—and if once the great Enemy, by his devices, can but hush the voice of conscience, sin will have nothing to oppose its unhallowed strides, and therefore will lead its victim captive from iniquity unto iniquity, till at length he falls a prey to his own folly and madness. Hence the danger of listening to the first suggestions of sin.

“Had the unhappy Corder not tampered with the first suggestions of the arch Adversary of souls,—had he resisted the first allurements of sin,—had he suppressed the first unchaste desire, probably he would at this moment have been a happy and reputable member of the community.

“But see, with what horror every eye beholds his deeds—how he has wrung with agony the heart of his aged mother and his once-loved wife! how he has indelibly impressed sorrow upon his numerous relatives, and undeservedly exposed them to unfeeling observation; and what shall I say more, in order to convince you of the vast importance of guarding against the first overtures of sin—shall I bring from the grave the mangled and lacerated remains of the unfortunate Maria Marten? Nay, her own voice, could it be heard from the world of spirits, should testify its importance. Were we, my brethren, to indulge in imagination, we might easily conceive her deploring, in tears of blood, her first hapless step towards seduction. ‘It was this,’ she would say, (and O that her vile seducers could but hear the charge!) ‘that led to the adoption of a course which terminated in cruelty and disgrace, and precipitated me into a world almost unthought of, altogether unknown.’

“Whether, therefore, we view the seducer or the seduced—the murderer or the murdered, we see the woe of the text fulfilled: ‘Woe unto the wicked!’ it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.’

“Another ingredient in the portion of the wicked is the *upbraidings of conscience*.

“The wicked are constantly the subjects of alarming apprehensions. Even in the ordinary concerns of life, but especially under trouble, the conscious neglect of duty, or abuse of privilege, perpetually presses most painfully upon the mind; and guilt contracted leaves no peace to the

wicked : he is as the troubled sea, which cannot rest ; often at his wits' end, seeking rest, but finding none. ' Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him.' Conscience, in past times a faithful friend, is now become the most malignant foe. Conscience is the vicegerent of God in the soul, and is an impartial and swift witness against all sin ; it will, therefore, in spite of every effort to silence it, speak for its divine Lord. O what a bitter ingredient in the cup of the wicked is an upbraiding conscience ! The spirit of man may sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear ?

" I beheld this scripture realized in the experience of the late William Corder : even before his committal, his eyes were almost bursting from their sockets through anxiety ; his countenance was pale and dejected ; his limbs trembled under him ; his voice faltered, and his every look truly expressive of horror and despair. Although he had passed the first pangs naturally produced by being suddenly torn from a wife to whom he was evidently very affectionately attached ; and, although he had passed the pangs resulting from the prospect of being confronted with witnesses and jurors, during the inquest relative to the cause of Maria's death, and the important issues of that inquest, I cannot but suppose (admitting that, subsequently, he conducted himself with an unbecoming levity) that, even then, conscience was the tyrant of his soul—at times, the inexorable foe to his peace.

" Here I must be considered as addressing myself to the youthful of both sexes. Believe me, my dear young friends, you are all exposed to sin, and all its fatal consequences. An evil heart of unbelief, a vain and sinful world, and the most subtle enemy, are ever ready to lead you from the paths of virtue and piety, into the paths of wickedness and vice ! Oh ! if you value your own peace—if you have but the shadow of regard for your never-dying soul—if you possess only the semblance of affection for your beloved parents, flee youthful lusts, flee every species of intemperance, and carefully avoid all company that might seduce you into sin.

" I have, in the very hand-writing of the departed William Corder, a declaration that it was unchaste association, and lewd company, which paved his way to murder and to death. And we are assured that poor Maria Marten could attest the same, with reference to herself. These are facts that



proclaim, infinitely louder than many arguments, the great danger of evil company, and of giving rein to unhallowed passion.

“*To the Wicked.* Are you indifferent to your own eternal welfare? whence comes this indifference? It must surely originate either in your ignorance or disbelief of the Word of God. O, why will ye die? would to God that you were wise, that you would consider your latter end, and the everlasting portion that awaits you. Could the unheard-of tortures of that unseen world of misery be adequately conceived,—could the piercing groans of that infernal prison reach your ears,—could the vivid flames of the eternal burning burst upon your view,—O could you but for one short moment experimentally feel the anguish of the worm that dieth not, methinks the remembrance of past guilt, and the consequent forebodings of an eternal existence where hope never cometh, would urge but one inquiry, and that, What must I do to be saved? Neither would you give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until you had ascertained, upon scriptural grounds, that it would ‘be well with you’—well in life—well in death—and well in a judgment to come.”

---

#### THE REV. MR. C. HYATT'S DISCOURSE NEAR THE RED BARN,

(*Preached on the Sunday after Corder's Execution.*)

We received a communication from a correspondent residing at Ipswich, relative to the sermon preached by Mr. Hyatt, referring us to the *Suffolk Chronicle*, which contained the outline of the discourse; from that respectable journal, therefore, we have availed ourselves of a few extracts.

The narrator says,—the public papers having announced that the Rev. C. Hyatt, of London, would preach a sermon on Sunday, August 17, in the road and within sight of the Red Barn, at Polstead, I was induced by a friend to accompany him thither, and we arrived at that sweetly rural village before two o'clock in the afternoon.

Before we reached the (Cock) public-house, we saw numerous groups of cottagers pouring into the road which led to the spot selected, when, after leaving our vehicle at the inn, we walked towards the Red Barn, where we found about five hundred persons assembled. Having waited about a quarter of an hour, the Reverend Gentleman arrived, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Moore, of Boxford, his son-in-law, and having ascended a gig, which was drawn up on an eminence, the assembly (which now consisted of from fifteen hundred to two thousand persons) sung the 88th hymn, 1st book, of Dr. Watt's Collection, after which the preacher addressed the multitude from the 23d verse of the xxxiid chapter of the Book of Numbers,—‘Be sure your sin will find you out.’

The Reverend Gentleman was attired in full canonicals, and, in addition to other qualifications, possessed a commanding voice. He endeavoured to point out the nature of sin, observing that every deviation from the revealed will of God might be deemed a transgression.

He observed that when standing in the Red Barn, a few days after the discovery of the atrocious deed, which had disgraced the village, a bystander remarked that, ‘*what was to be*, had taken place,’ and that it ‘was doubtless ordained that in the Red Barn, Corder should deprive Maria Marten of existence.’ He cautioned his hearers not to entertain such pernicious doctrines, observing that the just God would not punish us for sins which we could not avoid; and that to indulge in such observations was in effect to charge God with the commission of that which he abhorred; sin was a voluntary violation of the law of God, and, although *tempted*, man was not *forced* to commit sin.

He then enlarged upon the sorrow and distress



which were frèquently brought upon a whole family by the misconduct of a single member of it, and pathetically entreated the inhabitants of Polstead, and those who resided near the bereaved mother, to render her all the consolation in their power, and never to let the sin of the child be brought as a charge against the parent.

He observed, that many would say, while in the commission of a secret sin, "Tush, God doth not see it. I shall be able to accomplish what I have in view without its being known;" but he (the preacher) would apply the words of the text, "*Be sure your sin will find you out,*" if not in this world, it will, "when the secrets of all hearts are opened at the awful day of Judgment." "Shall He," inquired the preacher, "who formed the ear, not hear; shall He that planted the eye, not see?" He then pointed out the similitude of Corder's case with that of Cain, the first murderer; viz. his seeking a quarrel with his victim as a pretext for the murder which he intended to commit, and afterwards denying a knowledge of the guilty deed. Cain exclaimed, that his punishment was greater than he could bear, and there could be no doubt but that the perpetrators of bloody deeds have often led a life which might be compared to a hell upon earth; and he proceeded to prove from Scripture many instances of sin having been found out in a very remarkable manner. No county, he observed *with the exception of that in which he resided*, had been more fruitful in crimes than that of Suffolk; and many men had been found who were base enough to assist in the commission of offences, and then devils sufficient to impeach their accomplices.

The Reverend Gentleman disclaimed being influenced by any other motive in coming amongst them, than an earnest desire, that the inhabitants of Polstead and its vicinity might profit by the me-

lancholy catastrophe which had occurred; hence he pressed upon them the consideration that "the wages of sin is death." He trusted that the fate of Maria Marten would deter other females from a predilection for dress beyond their station—a propensity which too often led them to make a sacrifice of virtue in order to obtain it.

In conclusion, the Reverend Gentleman took a short review of the life and actions of Corder, and exhorted his audience to permit the dreadful catastrophe which they had witnessed, to make a lasting impression on their minds.

Among other theological discourses which we have seen, was one preached in the Parish Church of Dunstable, Bedfordshire, by the Reverend S. Piggott, M. A. A sermon was also preached at St. Dunstan's, Stepney, and other of the metropolitan churches.

---

We have been favoured with a communication from Mr. Creed, surgeon of the Suffolk Hospital at Bury St. Edmund's, which, had we received it in time, should have been inserted in an earlier part of our History, but the absence of the writer from England was the cause of its delay. We now take the opportunity of laying before our readers a verbatim account of

#### DR. SPURZHEIM'S REPORT.

"I had great pleasure in finding, on my return from Paris, the cast of the murderer Corder, which you were so kind as to send for my collection, and for which I give you my best thanks.

"Corder's cranium requires some close knowledge of the brain to be judged of with accuracy. The distance between the cerebellum and the posterior lobes of the brain (on the conical



protuberance of the occiput), and the separation between the two hemispheres of the brain, are considerable; the former presenting an elevation, the latter a groove: the size of the whole head is middling. Among the animal feelings, acquisitiveness, secretiveness, and combativeness predominate; amativeness and philoprogenitiveness, destructiveness and cautiousness come next; love of approbation and adhesiveness follow; finally, inhabitiveness and self-esteem are very small. In the sincipital region, marvellousness and imitation are the largest; then comes hope, afterwards follow benevolence, veneration, and ideality: firmness and conscientiousness are very small. It is remarked, that the large organs of marvellousness and imitation may be confounded by beginners in phrenology with that of benevolence; but the error may be avoided by reflecting that the organ of benevolence lies in the middle line, and is in the immediate line with *comparison*. On the other hand, the most elevated spot on Corder's head cannot be taken for veneration, since the protuberance extends laterally and forwards, which veneration never does. The whole of the intellectual region on the forehead is very small. The organs of individuality, *tune*, and *language*, predominate; the organs of the reflective powers are very small; the natural moral character of such a head is formed by animal feelings, deprived of self-esteem, firmness, conscientiousness, and reflection, and very little assisted by benevolence, veneration, and ideality—his internal monitor, therefore, is quite wanting. Marvellousness and hope influenced his religious opinions, while the morality of his actions is overlooked. I should like to know some particulars of Corder's private life—concerning his large tune and imitation; whether and how they have been active for themselves, or in combination with amativeness, \* \* \* secretiveness, and acquisitiveness. The great development of this marvellousness, too, excites my phrenological curiosity: if you can satisfy it, you will bestow a new favour

“ Upon your obliged,

“ J. SPURZHEIM.”

“ *To Mr. Child, Bungay.*”

---

## MATRIMONIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Before we introduce a number of letters upon the subject of Matrimony into our pages, it will be necessary to make a few remarks relative to Corder's advertisement, and the answers in reply thereto.

In the month of October, 1827, Corder lodged at the Bull, in Leadenhall-street, and it was during that time he called upon Mr. Foster, a stationer, living in the same street, and made several purchases of stationery, for which he always paid punctually, and which he either took or ordered to be sent to his Inn. His occasional visits appear to have brought on a slight acquaintance. Corder at this time, being attired like a gentleman, and generally in good spirits, lively and exceedingly jocular, and appeared to have no other anxiety on his mind than the success of his advertisement; the answers to which he requested might be received at Mr. Foster's shop, as he had no friend in London of whom he could ask the favour. Mr. Foster reluctantly complied with the request, in pursuance of which the following advertisement appeared in the *Morning Herald* of November 13.

“ MATRIMONY—A Private Gentleman, aged 24, entirely independent, whose disposition is not to be exceeded, has lately lost the chief of his family by the hand of Providence, which has occasioned discord among the remainder, under circumstances most disagreeable to relate. To any female of respectability, who would study for domestic comfort, and willing to confide her future happiness in one every way qualified to render the marriage state desirable, as the advertiser is in affluence, the lady must have the power of some property, which may remain in her own possession\*. Many very happy marriages have taken place

\* That part of the sentence which relates to property, did not appear in the advertisement inserted in the *Sunday Times*.



through means similar to this now resorted to, and it is hoped no one will answer this through impertinent curiosity; but should this meet the eye of any agreeable lady, who feels desirous of meeting with a sociable, tender, kind, and sympathising companion, they will find this advertisement worthy of notice. Honour and secrecy may be relied on. As some little security against idle applications, it is requested that letters may be addressed (post-paid) to A. Z., care of Mr. Foster, stationer, No. 68, Leadenhall-street, which will meet with the most respectful attention\*."

It appears that Mr. Foster delivered forty-five letters unopened to Corder, among which number was the epistle of the ill-fated Miss Mary Moore, who shortly after became Mrs. Corder. He inserted another advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, on the 25th of November; in consequence of which the letters now printed were received at Mr. Foster's, in addition to many that were returned to the Post-office because they were unpaid. Corder, in the mean time, broke off his visits, and Mr. Foster heard no more of his old customer until April, 1828, when the newspapers announced his apprehension, and, by the description given, he was known to be the same person.

After the trial and condemnation of Corder, Mr. Foster very properly opened the letters, and published them to the world. Their number, their style, and contents will doubtless appear, at first sight, matters of astonishment, but we shall by and by make a few remarks on this head. It has been insinuated that ladies in their carriages called at Mr. Foster's *Love Dépôt*, but this is not true; it is, however, true, that some well dressed

\* When we look at the character which Corder gives of himself, viz., "whose disposition is not to be exceeded," and "a sociable, tender, kind, and sympathising companion,"—and combine it with what we know of him before and since, the heart sickens at the recital, and our astonishment at the whole of his nefarious conduct is only equalled by our disgust.

females, who called with answers, did inquire of Mr. F. respecting the character of the advertiser—a question which he, of course, could not answer.

It may be recollected, that the accounts published in April, (and to which we have alluded in the early part of this publication,) referred to this advertisement and its success, but we are left to conjecture from whence this information sprang, because there was only Corder and *another* person who could have known the certainty of that part of the history.

A contemporary writer reminds us, as a matter of importance, that the scheme of Corder to obtain a wife, was set on foot nearly at the same time that he wrote the two letters to the aged father of his wretched victim, and which were read in Court at the trial\*, inasmuch as they were dated from the “Bull Inn, Leadenhall-Street, Thursday, Oct. 18, and Oct. 23, 1827.”

In the former of those letters he says, “My stay in town will be very short—anxious to return to her who is *now my wife*, and with whom I shall now be the happiest of men.” What a cool, calculating, deliberate villain! Some have attempted to draw a parallel between Corder and Thurtell; but we say, depraved and cruel as he was, the comparison is much in favour of the latter †.

How a wretch so polluted, and, as one would suppose, tormented with such self-reproach, could embark in such an enterprise, we are at a loss to know; and his conduct appears the more extraordinary, when we consider that, at this time, only seven years had elapsed since he left school, and that short period spent principally in rustic seclusion ‡.

\* Vide page 154—156.

† Among other coincidences connected with their sanguinary history, is the fact of both of them having a brother drowned.

‡ If the suggestions which prudence dictated had been attended to, there is no doubt but some of the *ladies* would have



It has been intimated that those letters ought not to form a part of this history, and those who object assign as a reason that they may induce young ladies, nay, even grave matrons, whose "sober brown is mingled with the lively grey," to write amatory epistles. This objection is more than counterbalanced by the hope that the introduction of these letters will afford an opportunity of conveying those moral cautions, and of tendering that advice which will not be lost upon the sensitive minds of our fair readers. We sincerely trust that the publicity given will convince them that to notice the trash of a Matrimonial Advertisement, is to depart from the delicacy of their sex, and that they will listen to our well-intentioned

#### HINTS TO THE LADIES.

We heartily hope that the sad experience of the unfortunate Mrs. Corder will deter our female readers from embarking in a speculation where the chances are five hundred against them. An upright, prudent, and moral man, would hardly, we conceive, make his desires known, in regard to matrimony, through the medium of a newspaper. Yet there may be here and there a Platonic lover, a Quixotic sentimentalist, or a *timid being*, who might resort to such a measure; but what female would like to link her destiny through life with either of those characters, however unobjectionable he might be in a moral point of view? Our opinion is, and it is founded

inquired in the neighbourhood where he had resided, which would have had the effect of putting an end to his matrimonial scheme, and have also opened the eyes of Maria's friends, whom he was, at that very time, deluding with vile falsehoods. We consider this an astonishing instance where Providence suffered infatuation to reign in the mind of this wretch, so as to vainly imagine that he could have gone on from month to month in making her friends believe that Maria was alive, and, moreover, his lawful wife

upon considerable experience, arising from a long acquaintance with the public press, that those advertisements generally emanate from speculative, sensual, and sordid men, whose aim is to obtain a *mistress*, or a *fortune*, rather than a wife; and how many there have been who will ever curse the day when they were induced to form an alliance with such adventurers!

A woman who receives for her husband a person of whose moral and religious character or connexions in the world she is ignorant, stakes her welfare upon a very hazardous experiment. How diversified—how strict—and how persevering should be her inquiries respecting the man who supplicates to become her husband!

Unless the dispositions, the temper, the genuine character, and inmost principles are mutually known, what rational hope, what reasonable chance could there be to expect happiness? “As then the choice of a husband is of the greatest importance to female happiness, be sure you make it with the utmost circumspection. Never give way to a sudden gust of passion, and dignify it by the name of love.—Genuine love is not founded in caprice; but on esteem, on honourable views, on virtue, on similarity of tastes, and sympathy of souls.”

Dr. Watts, in his *Lyric Poems*, has some pretty verses on the paucity of happy marriages: we give an extract:—

“Say, mighty Love! and teach my song  
To whom thy sweetest joys belong,  
And who the happy pairs  
Whose yielding hearts and joining hands  
Find blessings twisted with their bands  
To soften all their cares

“Not the wild herd of nymphs and swains  
Who thoughtless fly into the chains  
As custom leads the way—  
If there be bliss without design,  
Ivies and oaks may grow and twine,  
And be as bless'd as they.



“ Not the mad tribe that hell inspires  
 With wanton flames—those raging fires  
 The purer bliss destroy :  
 On Ætna’s top let Furies wed,  
 And sheets of lightning dress the bed  
 T’ improve the burning joy.

“ For kindred souls alone must meet :  
 ’Tis friendship makes the bondage sweet  
 And feeds their mutual loves ;  
 Bright Venus, on her rolling throne,  
 Is drawn by gentlest birds alone,  
 And Cupids yoke the doves.”

Without further remark, we trust that young ladies will learn a useful lesson from the complicated misfortunes which have been experienced by one of their ill-fated and precipitate sex, and never suffer their imagination to be deluded, their passions corrupted, or their judgment weakened. Be it ever remembered that fancy oftentimes is captivated, the soul enchanted, and the understanding beclouded with specious representations which at once flatter and deceive; for

“ Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,  
 First wish to be imposed on, and then are.”\*

---

#### LETTERS SENT BY VARIOUS LADIES, IN ANSWER TO CORDER’S MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT.

##### I.

“ Sir,

“ The perusal of your advertisement in the *Sunday Times* awakened a feeling of sympathy, as I also have been the subject of the chastening hand of Providence.

“ I do not reply for myself, but having the pleasure of knowing a young and amiable female, in her 23d year, and who is highly accomplished, it occurred to me that she might prove a companion suited to ameliorate your present sorrows, and enliven your future prospects. You request real name and address; forgive me, Sir, if under the existing

\* For an excellent dissuasive against hasty and improvident marriages, vide “ The New Female Instructor,” published by T. Kelly Paternoster-row.

circumstances I withhold both, as I think it would be an infringement of the female delicacy to avow them in the present stage of our correspondence. If you will favour me with an interview on Waterloo-Bridge, *between* the hours of *three* and *four* on the afternoon of Wednesday next, I shall be able to communicate every particular to you; that you may recognize me, it is necessary to say, that I shall wear a black silk dress, red shawl, and gray muff, claret-coloured bonnet, and black veil; our conversation *must* commence by your presenting me with this note. Believe me when I add, that I am perfectly serious, and have no other motive in addressing you than promoting the happiness of two young persons.

“ I am, Sir

“ Yours very obediently,

*Monday Evening, 8 o'clock.*

---

II.

“ *Nov. 27th, 1827.*

“ On taking up the paper this morning, your advertisement was the first thing that met my eye, and in seeing the word ‘Matrimony,’ I laughing said, a gentleman wants a wife, but I suppose he is still in greater want of money, otherwise he wishes to make himself warm this cold weather, by laughing at the credulity of the female sex; yet surely no man of understanding can derive pleasure by making fools of those who are *by nature weak*, and entitled to protection and pity, rather than ridicule. Having said all I had to say, I fetched a deep sigh, conscious, *I suppose, of my own defects*, and again looked at the paper without intending to do it. I read your advertisement through, and was not a little surprised on finishing it; for, although there may not be one word of truth, yet certainly it wears the semblance of sincerity. If really your situation is what you have represented it to be, allow me, although a stranger, sincerely to sympathise with you;—though young, I have suffered much by unhappy differences in my own family, therefore, can feel for others who endure the like misery.

“ I repeat, if your tale is true, upon my word I pity you: if it is a fiction, I hope my sex may be revenged by your being obliged, at some future period, to pass *a month, one month*, in a *house of discord*. But, if this statement is in-



deed sincere, I hope ere long you may be enabled to regain peace and undisturbed tranquillity; that you may soon find a lady whose disposition may accord with what yours is said to be. For myself I want not a home; I have every necessary and comfort, though not the superfluities of life, and am far from thinking that happiness is only the attendant on riches. I am content, and strive to make others happy—the great can do no more, and I with pleasure look forward to the day which I hope will introduce me to one who may possess some of those amiable qualities which the advertisement says belongs to you. Do not hold up to ridicule those foibles which are constitutional in my sex; remember perfection is unattainable; rather pity than condemn, and in return I will wish you, whoever you may be, all the happiness you can wish yourself.

“And I remain, &c.”

---

III.

“Nov. 30th, 1827.

“SIR,

“If you will take the trouble to walk on the south side of Northampton-square, between the hours of twelve and one on Monday next, with a white pocket-handkerchief in your hand, I shall be there, and may perhaps have an interview with you; if my affection is engaged, your happiness will be the constant study of”

---

IV.

“Dec. 1st, 1827.

“SIR,

“In perusing *The Times* Paper of Nov. 25th, I observed your advertisement for a partner in the marriage life, where you say any *female of respectability* who would study for domestic comforts, and willing to confide in you, led me to suppose that fortune was not your object, which induced me to make the application, though I must say *Prudence* whispers it is contrary to the rules of decorum, and I believe this is the first time I have ever deviated from her precepts. I am a female of respectability; my father has been a very *respectable* tradesman, and a man of good fortune, but Providence has now placed me in a more *humble situation*; I have had a good plain education, but

no accomplishments. If I have been too presumptuous in addressing one who styles himself an independent gentleman and a man of honour, I trust *this may be buried in oblivion*; but should it be thought worthy an answer, it will much oblige your humble servant.

“ P.S. Probably you might like a description of the writer of these lines: she is of rather short stature, slight made, not handsome, dark complexion, dark hair and eyes, and one who has not wrote out of *impertinent* curiosity, but, for particular reasons, dare not sign her name in this; but if she have occasion to write a second, you may rely upon it being signed, should this be answered.”

“ *Direct for ———, Post-office,*

“ *To be left till called for.*”

---

v.

“ SIR,

“ Having seen your advertisement in the *Sunday Times* newspaper, I beg leave to reply to it, not from an impertinent curiosity, but from a wish that what I state may meet with your approbation. I am the daughter of a respectable tradesman, he is the only one of the family in business; I have a step-mother, and there is a second family; therefore, to prevent any disagreement amongst us, I have left my father's house, and am at this time earning my own living in one of the first establishments in ——— (not as a milliner or dress-maker). My friends are kind enough to say that I possess a good temper, lively disposition, and, as to appearance, passable, not any pretension to beauty. With regard to property, all I ever expect to be mistress of will be a small income, left me by mother; it is sufficient to keep me independent when I shall have the misfortune to lose my father, which I hope may be many years ere that event happens. My age is the same as your own, twenty-four. Your being in affluent circumstances would not induce me to become your wife, unless I found your disposition and mine could agree, and that in every sense of the word I could love, honour, and obey, with pleasure and gratitude. I think I have said all that prudence will allow; I must add, I think it rather unfair for you to expect a respectable female would like to give her real name and address in the first letter she writes; for



although your advertisement reads very fair, there may be *some little trick on your side*, but I am in earnest, and you may depend upon the greatest secrecy. Should what I have said meet your approbation, direct to me, post paid,"

"*Monday evening, Nov. 26th, 1827.*"

---

## VI.

"SIR,

"By accident I saw your advertisement in the *Sunday Times*: its seeming honour and sincerity induced me to answer it. I feel I am guilty of an impropriety in doing so without the knowledge of my friends; but a disposition like the one you seem to possess will pardon the indiscretion when you know the situation I am placed in. My father has received an offer from one whose disposition is, in every respect, the opposite of my own; I can accept it only by sacrificing every feeling of delicacy and affection: therefore, I have taken the only means that presented of preventing the sacrifice of my own happiness, or the wishes of my friends. Your disposition seems one that would ensure the happiness of those who would intrust it to your care.

"My friends and family connexions are respectable, my disposition is naturally candid and affectionate, and would make it the study of my life to add to the happiness of my friends. I am very young, not yet nineteen; perhaps that would be an objection. I have not, as you wished, signed my name; but if your intentions are honourable, and you wish to hear further particulars, a letter addressed A. B., to be left at the office till called for, will meet with every attention from

"Your obedient servant,"

"*Nov. 27, 1827.*"

---

## VII.

"*Nov. 26th, 1827.*"

"SIR,

"Seeing your advertisement again renewed, I feel inclined to take one step towards introducing you to my sister, one of the most amiable and excellent of human beings. As a preparatory step I shall be happy in the

honour of seeing you on Wednesday or Thursday morning next, at my office in ———

“Yours very respectfully,”

---

VIII.

“SIR,

“On taking up the newspaper of yesterday, and seeing the word *Matrimony*, induced me carefully to peruse the advertisement, and from the very affable and condescending manner in which you expressed yourself, appears to convince me that you mean to act honourable, and which has induced me to possess myself of sufficient courage, which requires a female to have to address a gentleman on so delicate and important a subject. My personal attractions I shall leave you to decide upon; my age is twenty-four, and I hope I am endowed with all those endearing qualities which are so essential to render a married life happy, assuring you that a private interview with you is most anxiously wished for, and the place I purpose meeting you to-morrow at twelve o'clock; I shall be walking towards ———, distinguished by wearing a black gown, with a scarlet shawl, and black bonnet, white handkerchief, in my hand. If not convenient to-morrow, will be there the same hour Wednesday.

“I remain,

“Your most obedient servant,”

---

IX.

“*Sunday Evening.*

“SIR,

“In reading the *Sunday Times* I find your advertisement for a wife, and, in answer to it, I beg to say, should you mean what you therein state, I shall expect to hear from you.

“Yours respectfully,

“———, *Kent.*”



## X.

“Observing your advertisement in the *Morning Herald*, I beg leave to state, if your intentions are serious and honourable, I shall be happy of a personal interview with you at ———, which is my house and address.

“I am an orphan, twenty-two years of age, have been genteelly brought up and educated, understand the domestic concerns of a house, and qualified to make any person happy and comfortable. If this should meet your approbation and wishes, you will favour me by calling to-morrow, November 30th, between the hours of *four* and *five*. Be punctual, because all the other *hours* of the day I am engaged in business; you shall then know all particulars concerning myself and family.

“*Thursday Morning, November 29th, 1827.*”

---

## XI.

“SR,

“Your advertisement in the *Sunday Times* for this day was pointed out to me, and being a young person of respectable connexions, but without property or a home, I have not the opportunity of obtaining a suitable companion, and these circumstances will, I trust, offer an excuse for my making this application. I am at present, and have been for some time, a teacher in a respectable school at ———, and it is with the sanction of the lady I am now with that I address you, and she will, if you think proper to notice my letter, give you any requisite information respecting me, but is unwilling that I should give you her address, as her establishment is so well known, unless you think proper to reply to this. My age is two-and-twenty. Trusting to your honour and secrecy,

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient humble servant,”

“*Address, Post-Office.*”

---

## XII.

“SIR,

“In answer to an advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, expressing your desire of being introduced to a female of domestic habits, and a disposition to insure hap-

piness in the marriage state, I beg leave to state I am of a retired and domestic character, having been always under the care of an amiable and prudent mother; I have a tolerable person, perhaps some beauty, nineteen years of age, good tempered, and of an affectionate disposition. I have resided in London about three years; my family is very respectable, but, owing to some change in circumstances, my circle of acquaintance is very limited, therefore I have but little chance of forming an establishment; this has induced me to enter into a detail of my own qualifications, a thing which is repugnant to my feelings.

“I feel rather averse to giving my address upon a first communication. If you answer this application, and are serious in the professions you make, I shall not withhold it.

“I remain, Sir,

“Your obedient humble servant,”

“Direct for

---

XIII.

“Nov. 25, 1827.

“When a female breaks through the rules of etiquette justly prescribed for her sex, as a boundary which she must not pass without sacrificing some portion of that delicacy which ought to be her chief characteristic, it must be for some very urgent reason, such as a *romantic* love, or a circumstance like the present; and in answering your advertisement, I feel that I am, in some degree, transgressing the law alluded to, and yet the novelty and sentiments of the advertisement itself, so entirely different from the language generally made use of (and which alone induced me to answer it), almost assure me that no improper advantage will be taken of the confidence I place in the honour of the writer; however, as you request that no person will write from motives of curiosity, I trust that no feeling of that nature actuated you in giving me this opportunity; but enough of preface.

“I need not describe my person, as, should an interview take place, you can judge for yourself; and for mental accomplishments, I am as much indebted to nature and good society as to education; but, from my retired habits and present sphere of life, I flatter myself I should be as well calculated to make a domestic man happy, and to enjoy



the social charms of domestic life, as if I had received the first *boarding-school* education, and mixed largely in the world of fashion. My prospects in life were once brilliant; but when misfortune, with her gloomy train of attendants, surrounded my family, the scene changed; but I have still some expectations, although, from the tenor of your advertisement, I presume fortune is but a secondary consideration; a companion only is wanted who would sympathise in all your joys or griefs, one who would return kindness with kindness, love for love, and, as I perfectly know my own heart, as far as regards those qualities, I do not flatter myself when I say that such a companion would I prove; and where confidence was shown, the fullest would be returned. Pardon the warmth of my expressions, nor think me forward in offering them, as I am no giddy girl; nor am I a romantic *old maid*, but a warm-hearted, affectionate girl, whose age qualifies her to pass between the two characters, being just turned twenty-one. Excuse my saying more on so delicate a subject; my family are of the highest respectability. References, of course, will be given and required. Waiting your answer,

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,”

---

XIV.

“ SIR,

“ As I was perusing yesterday's *Times*, I inadvertently cast my eyes on your advertisement, which I am induced to answer, not from a motive of curiosity, but for this reason, that from the general tenor of its contents, it so much resembles my own fate, that I cannot help thinking that our dispositions would in some measure be congenial to each other; and I am very sure that time must glide on much more agreeably when passed in the society of a tender and affectionate companion. To convince you that I am of a respectable family, I will give you a few particulars, which I hope and trust will be kept secret. My father was a ———. I was left an orphan, under the guardianship of ———, who placed me at a school to be educated for a governess; consequently, I have moved in society perhaps not inferior to the rank you hold; but, by a deviation from rectitude, which was occasioned by the too easily listening

to the flattery of one whose vows I foolishly believed to be true, I am entirely deserted by my family, and banished from society; nevertheless, I flatter myself that I do not altogether merit such a fate, for I do assure you that no one could have acted more prudently than I have done since the unfortunate circumstance happened, which has very much destroyed my peace of mind; but I still hope to see better days. I am two-and-twenty years of age, but have not the least pretension to beauty—quite the contrary. I have a sweet little girl, who is my greatest comfort; she is sixteen months old, and is beginning to prattle very prettily; I have no fortune whatever, but am supporting myself by needle-work at present, until I can meet with something more to my advantage. I mention these facts that you may not be led into any error; for I should be extremely sorry to act with any duplicity towards any one, and I leave you to consider how far your generosity will extend to appreciate my wrongs, and excuse my past misconduct. I trust that upon acquaintance you will find that I possess qualities which may in some measure overbalance, or at least mitigate, those errors which were committed through an affection which I supposed to be mutual, and, at the same time, honourable; but, alas! have found it quite the reverse. I can only add that, should you wish an interview, I am ready at any time to see you, either at my own abode, which you will find very respectable, or at any place you may appoint, appropriate with the circumstance; and should I finally prove the female of your choice, you may rest assured that nothing should be wanted on my part towards the augmentation of your happiness, and to render your house comfortable.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your humble servant,”

“ Mrs. ———.”

---

xv.

“ Dec. 3, 1827.

“ SIR,

“ On perusing my paper for Nov. 25, I observed an advertisement, the object of which appeared to be the obtaining a valuable partner. Now, I am not generally disposed to view advertisements of this description in a very favourable light, but on calmly observing this, I felt a sort



of sympathy, which could only have been imparted by the Disposer of all events. No doubt, ere this, you will naturally conclude that I am about to introduce myself; but this I assure you is not the case; it is an object more worthy your attention—an object who, I will not hesitate to say, would render that man happy above all others on whom she may bestow her heart as well as hand. A more sincere friend I have never met with, and many a pang would it cost me to part with her, but it grieves my very soul to see one so delicate, and possessing so much sensibility, alone in the world. I have a brother, of whom I believe Heaven could witness there is not on earth, at least in my opinion, one more calculated for a partner; his person is elegant and prospects bright, and he idolizes her: repeatedly has he addressed her on the subject, but has unfortunately been repulsed. She has often told me she esteemed him for his worth, and, ‘were it possible I could love him with that degree of warmth of which I know I am capable of loving, I would bestow on him my heart and hand; but, unfortunately for his happiness, I cannot love him, for I never will deceive that man who is to be my partner for life. I will marry that man, and him only, whom I could prefer to every other; that man without whom the world will become a barren waste.’ She has had, to my knowledge, several offers of good settlements; but she has told me, when I have spoken to her on the subject, she could not account for it, but she had never yet seen that object whom she should feel justified in exchanging her present situation with, and added, ‘O ——, I have a heart possessing too much sensibility to entrust it to the care of any man I have yet seen; recollect my happiness has once been sacrificed to parental authority.’ Perhaps you will be a little surprised when I tell you this paragon of perfection is a widow of twenty-three years of age; she lives alone, with a female servant, and has the —— business conducted for her by an assistant since her husband’s decease, which has been about three years. He was a very handsome man, universally respected: he adored her; she was the faithful and domestic wife. He has observed to me, although he felt convinced he had only obtained her hand, her value was above all price. He was ill above twelve months, during which time I had, in common with many others, an opportunity of witnessing her unexampled kindness to him; although at that time only twenty, she had the discretion of sixty, and were you only one week in her company you must adore her, if you possess

a heart capable of loving one who has, in my estimation, everything calculated to make the marriage state a perfect paradise; her disposition is beyond everything excellent; she has property, but to what amount I am not aware. If you have any connexions with the —— of —— you may know the unimpeached character of the family, as they have been well known to them from their earliest infancy. If you are still disengaged, and disposed to pay an early attention to this, you will find, should you succeed, that although a stranger to you has proved your best friend, as it regards the handwriting, although you must plainly perceive it is an assumed one, should you ever have an opportunity to show it, for I should fear her recognising it; I would not, for the wealth of the Indies, incur her displeasure. Probably you will say the distance is too far, but what is distance to obtain an article so valuable? If you feel disposed to address her on the subject, direct Mrs. ——.

“Yours respectfully.”

---

XVI.

“If the intention of the advertiser be truly such as stated in the advertisement, a young lady, without fortune, but of the highest respectability as to friends and connexions, would, from peculiar family arrangements, be induced to accept the honourable proposals of any gentleman of good moral character; but previous to any further communication on her part, must request a line from the advertiser (should he feel favourably inclined), with real name and address.”

---

XVII.

“SIR,

“In reply to your advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, November 25th instant, I must confess, on perusing I felt rather interested in your behalf; at the same time I am surprised a gentleman possessing so many good qualities, in addition to youth and fortune, should be under the necessity of adopting a mode so public, but there is some apology to be made after the reason you give. I am a young person without parents, possessing a small income, would of course have no objection to form an alliance with a gentleman of respectability, gifted with those desirable qualifications. With respect to myself, I have been well educated in the usual mode



of polite education, music, &c., and seen a great deal of domestic life, that, I flatter myself, having arrived at the age of twenty-five years, I am competent to fulfil the duties of a married life. I say nothing of my personal appearance, as I propose ocular demonstration. You must excuse my giving my real name and address, as I feel rather reluctant at the first to comply with your request. If you wish for an interview, you may direct to —

“ I am, Sir,

“ Yours respectfully,”

---

XVIII.

“ December 14th, 1827.

“ SIR,

“ In re-perusing your letter, it has since struck me you might perhaps have expected an answer, although it does not fully express it in your letter. Having so little knowledge of the person now addressed, I judge you will think with me, it must be a person void of feeling *that could say*, Yes, under such circumstances, though *we might be happy* hereafter without being better acquainted. So much premised, I think you will attach no blame to me; that part of your letter where it states to give up all the *gaieties* of this world, and live in solitude, I do not exactly comprehend; as to the *gaieties*, I have never been accustomed to them, but confess I like the society of a few select friends, and cannot entirely give them up. If this meets your approbation regarding solitude you are at liberty to treat further on the subject. Answer this. Direct as before —

“ Yours, &c.”

---

XIX.

“ December 30th, 1827.

“ SIR,

“ Having been obliged to be out a great deal the last two or three days, I was fearful your answer (if conveyed in the same manner the other two were) might have fallen into other hands, as there are more persons living in the house. At the receipt of your last, I thought it was high time to lay the whole proceedings (from beginning to end) before my brother, who was *exceedingly angry* I had done

such a thing, but consented, as things had gone so far, to meet you any day you might appoint, between the hours of four and six. I sincerely trust my not answering your letter before, has not been the means of anything serious happening, as I should have been extremely sorry to have occasioned such proceedings. Should have answered it before, but imagined I had said all I could, with prudence, in the other.

“Yours, &c.”

[Signed by the same person as the last letter.]

---

XX.

“A young lady (having yesterday perused an advertisement in the paper inserted A. Z.), whose opinion coincides with his respecting the many happy marriages which have taken place through that medium, and who flatters herself, upon further acquaintance, that she will not be found deficient in those amiable qualities so essentially requisite to render the marriage state happy.

“Further particulars may be obtained from ——— respecting the lady and her place of residence.

“Nov. 30, 1827.”

---

XXI.

“SIR,

“Your advertisement in the *Times* paper of yesterday has met my observation, and, though I feel some repugnance in answering it, yet circumstances, I trust, will justify the measure. I must now inform you that I have been genteelly educated, that my connexions are very respectable; I have a widowed mother, and only one surviving brother. Misfortunes of a painful and pecuniary nature have induced me to reside for the last three years with a lady, with whom I am treated as a daughter. My education, though genteel, has been quite of a domesticated nature, and I flatter myself that my disposition will not be found unamiable to any one with whom I might be disposed to form a permanent connexion. My friends are kind enough to consider my person pleasing, and my age does not exceed your own; you will, however, excuse my giving my name and address, as my ignorance of the party with whom I am corresponding leads to a similar feeling on my own part;



and, until I am acquainted with your name and residence, you must excuse my withholding my own. Should you be inclined to give them, address to ———.

“Nov. 26, 1827.”

---

XXII.

“Nov. 26, 1827.

“SIR,

“Having perused your advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, I feel myself every way qualified to answer it, myself and friends being very respectable, being brought up in a domesticated and economical line of life. I have no property, nor have I any expectations whatever. My age is twenty-six.

“Should this short picture of myself meet your approbation, please to direct ———.

“P. S. I shall observe the strictest secrecy and attention.”

---

XXIII.

“SIR,

“As I am at present resident at ———, your advertisement did not meet my notice until this morning. Feelingly alive to the general received opinion of the impropriety of answering advertisements, I will for once swerve, and reply to yours. You must at present excuse my giving you my address, as this letter is unknown to any one; and, should we eventually become acquainted, I should not ever wish it known, even to my own family, the way the acquaintance was formed. My family and connexions are of the highest respectability and character; mine would bear the most rigid scrutiny. In person I am considered a pretty little figure. Hair nut-brown, blue eyes, not generally considered plain, my age nearly twenty-five. My married friends have often told me, I am calculated to make an amiable man truly happy; and, without vanity, I think I am, as I am cheerful, domestic, of good education and disposition, and have always mixed in good society; in a letter like this, egotism must be pardoned.

“Should you consider this deserving of consideration, as I trust you are a man of honour, and would not sport with the feelings of a young person of respectability; if you are

serious on this subject, any further communications you may require I will readily give; if you will direct a letter to me as under, I will call there Thursday and Saturday mornings. May I request your name, and if your residence is generally in London or the country?

“Tuesday, Nov. 27.”

---

XXIV.

“Nov. 26, 1827.

“SIR,

“Your advertisement, which appeared in the *Sunday Times*, I feel inclined to answer. If you really are inclined to marry, and all is true which you state, I think I am the person. My age is twenty-two, and am happy to say possess a most amiable disposition; can play the piano-forte and sing tolerably well; also other accomplishments which I think not worthy of statement. I have always been brought up domesticated, and am quite able to manage, let my situation be what it may; my wish is to settle in life, provided I meet with one who I think deserves such a wife as I shall make. If your intentions are honourable, you will not blame me for requesting your name and address. First, I am sure if you do want a wife, that you will not lose a good one because she does not give it. If you send me yours, and a few more particulars, then I shall know how better to proceed. I am a young lady, now living in the town of ———, with my mother, and in a most respectable manner, are known and respected by all in it, therefore must say I should not like to expose myself and mother to ridicule; should your advertisement be only for a joke, consequently it would; therefore I must request you to direct to ———. Write by return of post, if possible. I shall send my servant for the letter, therefore, pay the post if you please.”

“P.S. I have no fortune till the death of my mother.”

---

XXV.

“SIR,

“I was rather surprised on perusing the *Sunday Times*, to see an advertisement from a gentleman, whose age is the same as my own. 'Tis strange that a person who possesses a fortune, as well as youth, &c. should have



recourse to so novel a mode in order to obtain a wife. Nevertheless, however odd or romantic it may appear, I agree with you that there are many happy marriages accrue from the plan you have adopted.

“ I flatter myself I have a reasonable good disposition, with natural domestic habits, which we all know is a great essential in a connubial life.

“ As to personal attractions, I must decline giving a description, as a personal interview will suffice. I must quote your own words (*honour and secrecy relied on*) ; notwithstanding I feel under the necessity, in this case, of non-complying with your request, furnishing you at present with my address, &c., but as a substitute, I propose an interview whenever it is convenient to have a walk. I should think Finsbury-square, or any other place in the vicinity of St. Paul’s, which I leave to your option. An answer will oblige, directed ———.

“ I am, Sir,

“ *Left at the Post-office.*”

“ Yours, &c.”

“ P.S. I shall expect to hear from you by return of post, if possible.”

---

XXVI.

“ SIR,

“ In answer to your advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, I take upon myself to say, that according to your statement, you will find me in every respect a desirable companion to make a wedded life comfortable, particularly as far as concerns domestic affairs, being a ——— daughter of respectability and at present comfortably situated ; but being aware at a future period the loss of a father will greatly alter my many comforts in a home, which makes me induced to say thus far. Should I be fortunate ever to meet with an agreeable and affectionate partner, I cannot say but I should certainly avail myself of the opportunity. I also would give you to understand I shall have no fortune till after my father’s decease. It appears you are not a fortune-hunter. I trust the person who is destined to be my companion for life will never have cause to regret. Should the advertiser feel disposed to answer this letter, be directing to” ———

“ P.S. Or by inserting a few lines in the *Sunday Times* will meet the eye of ———”

## XXVII.

"Dec. 1, 1827.

"A young lady who is desirous of settling in a respectable situation of life has seen A. Z.'s advertisement, but, previous to giving her name, would be glad to hear from him, stating whether he is still entirely disengaged, as the advertisement has been out some days.

"The lady thinks it rather unreasonable on the part of A. Z. to expect the 'real name and address,' at the same time withholding his own, as he must be aware that considerations of delicacy have, or ought to have, more weight with the female than the male part of the creation. The advertiser may feel assured that this letter is not written from impertinent motives, as the writer is really desirous of giving up the state of 'single blessedness.' She is under his own age, possesses some accomplishments, has moved in a genteel sphere of life, with an irreproachable reputation, and is generally considered of an amiable disposition. Having been thus explicit, the lady thinks herself entitled to ask some further particulars of A. Z., who may (if he thinks proper to continue this correspondence) address a letter to L. G."

## XXVIII.

"SIR,

"The young lady who addresses you having seen your advertisement in the *Times* of last Sunday, and considering, under all circumstances, that a further acquaintance may not prove unfavourable, is desirous of augmenting it; but under the impression that some imposition may have been practised, must decline at present giving her name except by initials; suffice it to say that she is entirely uninfluenced, and at her own disposal, and her respectability will be better known than described. If A. Z. should consider this epistle worth attending to, and will address (post paid) to —, he may depend on further communication from his,

"Most respectfully,"

"Nov. 28."

## XXIX.

"SIR,

"Having seen an advertisement in the *Times* paper, wherein you wish for a respectable female of domestic



habits for a partner for life, myself being disengaged, and of domestic habits, and having nothing but youth to recommend me, I take this opportunity to offer myself. If you think it worthy of your notice, a line addressed to —— will be attended to.”

---

## XXX.

“A young lady, aged nineteen, most respectably connected and considered truly amiable by all who know her, would have no objection to form a matrimonial alliance, should she meet with a gentleman (possessing the qualifications of A. Z.) on whom she could place her affections. Until the lady has some assurance of the honour of A. Z.’s intentions, she cannot think of subscribing her real name and address; but, should he deem this worthy of notice, a letter directed to —— Post-office, ——, will be attended to.”

---

## XXXI.

“SIR,

“As the marriage state may very properly be termed a lottery, I have at a hazard answered your advertisement in the *Times* paper of yesterday. To enter into particulars now would, I should conceive, be highly unnecessary, otherwise than I am respectably situated, with a mother; my prospects, like many others in this life, have been greatly blighted through the loss of a parent, but every satisfaction would be given in regard to connexions, should this bring forward an interview. To describe my person would be a vanity in myself, which I have never been taught to foster. Depending on your honour as a gentleman, I have inserted my real address.

“Miss ——.

“Nov. 26, 1827.”

---

## XXXII.

“SIR,

“I beg to answer your advertisement of last Sunday, but *really think it nothing but a frolic*; I know a charming young woman of *no property*, her friends *highly respectable*, nineteen years of age, exceedingly agreeable person, has had the charge of her parents’ house these three years, and brought up by a truly amiable and virtuous mo-

ther. I can with great truth say the young lady is not aware of my answering your advertisement. If you think proper, you may address a line to Mrs. ——. I hope you will act honourably with regard to the name, as the writer is a married woman. A friend will put this in the twopenny post.

“Your obedient Servant,

“The young lady has never been attached to any one, nor has she ever left her friends.”

---

XXXIII.

“SIR,

“Having read your advertisement in the paper of to-day, I have taken the liberty of answering it, for, if you possess the good *qualities* you therein name, I certainly think you will make a *delightful* partner; consequently I shall expect to see or hear from you on Wednesday next, the 28th instant.

“Yours respectfully.”

“Nov. 25, 1827.”

---

XXXIV.

“*Monday Night.*

“SIR,

“I read your advertisement on Sunday last, and have taken the first opportunity of answering it; if you are not in too much haste in settling your affairs, I should like to hold a correspondence with you, until we know each other better, if convenient to you, for there is more disgrace attached to me in answering anything in the newspaper, and more danger of my family becoming acquainted of my so doing; and if this does not meet your approbation, please to destroy this, and let nothing of it pass your lips; and if to the contrary, it must be by letter for a short time, until I can break it out to them. Please to write whether or no, and tell me how far you disapprove, for there is room in us all to improve. I shall be looking out for a letter at the latter end of the week, and hope that I shall meet no disappointment. Please direct your letter for — Post-office; to be left till call for (unpaid). Good night in haste.—*Entre nous.*”



## XXXV.

“ A young lady aged eighteen years, who flatters herself that her accomplishments, temper, and disposition, are calculated to be conducive to the happiness of such a person as A. Z. describes himself, confiding in his *honour* and *secrecy*, wishes to have an interview. A few lines, stating whether four o'clock to-morrow will be convenient to A. Z. for that purpose, will oblige.

“ *Monday morning.*”

---

## XXXVI.

“ A young lady of respectability, who carefully perused A. Z.'s advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, feels confident she could meet the wishes of the advertiser, but does not feel authorised in stating real name and address unless the gentleman will first favour her with his, as a sense of propriety, and not curiosity, dictates the request. Secrecy may be relied on.

“ An answer directed to E. A., ———, shall meet with every consideration, and a speedy acknowledgment.

“ *26th Nov. 1827.*”

---

## XXXVII.

“ SIR,

“ Having seen an advertisement in the *Sunday Times* respecting an application for a female of respectability, I flatter myself I am competent to answer your expectations. As I am candid and honourable on my part, shall expect the same, with secrecy, on yours. If you think well, I should like to have an answer, with your real name and address, previous to an interview. I rely on your honour, and subscribe myself

“ Your well-wisher,”

“ *Nov. 25, 1827.*”

---

## XXXVIII.

" SIR,

" In answer to your advertisement of yesterday, I beg to inform you that I am quite of your opinion, that many happy marriages have ensued by the same means resorted to by you. It is my earnest wish to meet with an agreeable companion, such as you represent yourself, and such I think to be essential to those in the married state; therefore, if you have not made your choice ere this, from the many answers which no doubt you have had, I shall be happy to hear further from you."

---

## XXXIX.

" SIR,

" On perusing your advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, it immediately struck me that a merry-hearted as well as an agreeable companion might be necessary to your happiness in a wife, particularly as your spirits appear to be in a state of depression; if so, you may possibly find in your humble servant the identical little companion formed to constitute your felicity."

---

## XL.

" Nov. 26, 1827.

" If the gentleman who inserted an advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, headed ' Matrimony,' will call at ———, and ask to see Miss ———, between the hours of twelve and three to-day, he may have an interview, when every other particular will be most candidly stated. Should the advertiser look for accomplishments or beauty an interview will be unnecessary."

---

## XLI.

" Monday Morning.

" SIR,

" Trusting to the honour and secrecy mentioned in your insertion of yesterday, I take the liberty of stating, in reply, my willingness to enter into the matrimonial engagement you propose, provided, on a personal interview



we should be mutually satisfied with each other. I am now in my nineteenth year, and possessed of some personal attractions, together with a mild and domestic disposition; beyond this it might, probably, be deemed unbecoming to enter into further detail at the moment; I shall, therefore, conclude by assuring you of the respectability of my family and connexions, stating, at the same time, that as I have thought proper to answer your advertisement without their knowledge, I shall feel obliged, in the event of your considering it worth notice, by your addressing your communications to myself.

“ I am respectfully, Sir,

“ Your obedient humble servant.

“ P.S.—I again repeat, that I put the fullest confidence in your honour and secrecy.”

---

XLII.

“ 22d December, 1828.

“ SIR,

“ Perusing your advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, for a partner, I have taken the liberty of addressing you. I must agree with you that it is a strange way of forming a matrimonial connexion; however, from what you mention, I think there is a prospect of happiness. I should have no objection of forming a connexion of the kind, after a further explanation—first, the respectability of your family and connexions; to what church you belong, &c. I am about twenty-three years of age, and have the vanity to think that my person would please most men, and my disposition without a fault. I have, however, no fortune, but my family and connexions are very respectable. I have very near connexions high in the employ of the ——— Company; in short, I could easily give you satisfactory references; my education has been liberal, and I flatter myself I am able to conduct myself in any company. You may before this reaches you be engaged; I shall therefore say nothing more on the subject, without I hear from you in reply; if I am to be favoured with an answer, I beg it may be without delay.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your humble servant.”

## XXXIII.

" SIR,

" I reply to your advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, I take the liberty of informing you. I am of a respectable family; my papa having seen a reverse of fortune, has occasioned my mamma to enter into a boarding-house at ———, which, if it meets your approbation, will thank you to call to-morrow evening between four and five o'clock, as it will be the most likely time of seeing me. I have a sister at home with me, who is twenty-one; my age is twenty-two. I must beg to excuse this bad writing, as it is done in fear."

---

## XLIV.

" SIR,

" Seeing your advertisement of the 25th instant, and wishing to know if you really are serious in your intentions, I have taken the liberty of addressing you on the subject; as you did not mention anything concerning property, I will candidly inform you I am not in possession of any at present; but in expectation of some at a future period. You merely said you wished for a domestic partner, as such I intrude on your notice, trusting to time to discover what good qualities I possess. I hope you will not attribute it to vanity on my side, as I assure you I am actuated by a far better motive, but at the same time I must confess, I have not sufficient confidence to give you my address; so for the present, you must excuse me. If you answer this, please to direct ———, to be left at the Post-office till called for."

" *Monday morning, 12 o'clock.*"

---

## XLV.

" *Sunday Evening.*

" SIR,

" Having read your advertisement of the 25th, I cannot but acknowledge myself desirous of forming a connexion with a person possessing your qualifications. As I cannot presume I am all you could wish, (yet feeling a particular interest in you,) I beg you will appoint an interview, which



will enable you to judge more competently than any thing I could advance.

“Address ———. Should you not notice this, accept my sincere wish that you may meet with one deserving you.

“P. S. As the above is my real name and address, I fully rely on your honour.”

---

XLVI.

“SIR,

“Having accidentally taken up the *Sunday Times* of the 25th instant, I was much struck with the nature of your advertisement, which certainly appears to me rather extraordinary. However, as I have no reason to doubt you are not what you represent yourself to be, I have no hesitation in reply, of saying, I am one who possesses *every* qualification calculated to render the object of my choice happy. You will excuse, Sir, my not being explicit, but at present I consider it quite unnecessary.

“Should you think these few lines worthy of your notice, I shall expect that you will favour me with your real name and address, as well as any particular which you may conceive likely to establish confidence.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient servant.”

“Address ——— *Post Office.*”

---

XLVII.

“SIR,

“As I am not in the habit of trumpeting forth my own praises, I can say but little on the subject of the merits of personal charms; but, if I give any credit to the opinions of my friends, I am possessed of those requisites, so essentially necessary to constitute the happiness of the married state. You, however, I trust, if serious, may have an opportunity, if you think proper, to judge for yourself. If you have not made your choice, I shall be happy to hear from you immediately.

## XLVIII.

*Wednesday Morning, Nov. 28th.*

SIR,

"Having read an advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, headed 'Matrimony,' and having duly considered every particular connected with it, I am induced to answer the application, not as an idle person, but as one who feels somewhat qualified to render the marriage state desirable. No mention having been made respecting personal attractions, or pecuniary circumstances, I shall decline saying anything concerning them, as the former depends entirely on taste; the other will be explained either on an interview, or a second correspondence. It is to be hoped that the gentleman's intentions are of an honourable nature, as advertisements have been put in papers similar to the one in question, merely to sport with the feelings of the female sex.

"Should you think this worthy of attention, a letter addressed ——— will meet, Sir,

"Yours, &c."

---

## XLIX.

SIR,

"In answer to your advertisement, I take the liberty of addressing you, stating that I am a young widow lady with no family, and quite competent to make the marriage state happy. Should this meet your approbation, letters to be left, post paid, at ———."

---

## L.

"Having taken up the *Sunday Times*, I see 'Matrimony' at the head of the paper; should the advertiser be sincere and honourable, he will meet a lady of respectability, (but not of fortune); one of very domestic habits, having been brought up by a dear and tender parent. Should the gentleman approve of this epistle, the lady will, in her next note, give her real name and address, and by giving her a line to ———, post paid, she will return an answer as soon as possible."

---



## LI.

"The advertisement of a private gentleman, aged twenty-four, in the *Sunday Times* paper, happened to meet the eye of a young lady, aged twenty-one, of the greatest respectability. The advertisement rather struck her; and, should the gentleman be really in earnest, he must advertise once again in the same paper, when he will hear further particulars. But the extreme modesty of the lady will not allow her to put her real name or address. The lady is at present in the country, but will shortly return to town.

"N. B. The lady is not very handsome."

---

## LII.

"*Sunday, Nov. 25.*

"SIR,

"Having read your advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, I feel induced to answer it, being desirous of engaging myself with you. I suppose we must be candid in such cases. I am the third daughter of a clergyman of the Church of England, who has eight children; therefore, you may imagine that I can have no fortune. My age is twenty-one, and I can give most unexceptionable references as to my character. I shall not be more explicit at present. Direct to ———."

---

## LIII.

"*Nov. 26, 1827.*

"SIR,

"I have taken the earliest opportunity of addressing you with these few lines. According to your advertisement, as you being the age that will suit me, twenty-four, and I am eighteen, so I think Providence *as* ordained that you and I *shood* come together, for I am not very *pleacntury* situated myself, and it appears that you are not. I am of very cheerful disposition, and *shood* study every thing for your comfort and happiness. If it will suit you, the most convenient time to see me will be at eleven o'clock in the morning, and three in the afternoon. If I do not see you in a day or two, I shall think that you are suited.

"Till then, adieu."

## LIV.

“ Nov. 26, 1827.

“ ——— has seen the advertisement by A. Z. in the *Sunday Times* of the 25th. She is a *widow*, and, as that may be an objection, she writes to ascertain that point before she gives her name and address, or enters into particulars.

“ If A. Z. has any communication to make, it must be done through the Two-penny Post Office, at Craig’s Court, Charing Cross.”

---

SINGULAR COINCIDENCE.

We were favoured with the following Original Letter, by Mr. Orridge, on the 16th of September, it being the last received by the convict Corder.

“ *Norfolk Hotel, Norwich,*  
*August 8, 1828.*

“ SIR,

“ The news has just reached me, who left Bury yesterday, for this city, that the jury had returned a verdict of Guilty against you, for the murder of Maria Marten.

“ I cannot fully account for the reason I am induced to address this letter; but, although unable so to account for this impulse of the moment, my pen is taken up for the best of motives, I can assure you.

“ From the firmness hitherto displayed by you, I was in hopes to have heard evidence adduced to the jury that would have satisfied them the act had not been committed by yourself. The law being left to take its course, your earthly career is now of a short duration, and as you consider on the approaching event, and scarcely feel contracted guilt pressing you down with the thought of a judgment to come, I trust you may cry unto One, who is mighty, ‘ to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him.’ ‘ What must I do to be saved? I say, acknowledge thy guilt at a throne of grace, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your immortal soul shall be saved. Remember he is just, good, gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and even delighting in mercy. There is no other way in which we can be saved but through that pointed out in the sacred scriptures, by searching which you will find him set forth as the way to truth. Your search must be for eternal life, which He gives, and every other blessing which can be needed in health, poverty, sickness, disgrace, death, and



the day of judgment ; all which is accomplished for sinners ‘ by his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, by his precious death and burial, by his glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost.’

“ Those who are led by the Spirit discover nothing in themselves but infirmity ; but in Him (the Saviour) dwells inestimable riches, and He now lives to plead at his Father’s right hand.

“ When you proceed toward the fatal platform, I hope you may offer up the following prayer :—‘ Remember me, Lord, a guilty, weak, and helpless worm, now thou art in thy kingdom, and sweetly assure me that my sin is pardoned before I depart hence and be no more seen !’ Take my advice,—in case you have anything to disclose respecting the child’s murder—do it.

“ This letter is not written to harrow up your feelings, rest assured, but to produce a contrary effect ; accompanied with the Lord’s blessing, I shall not have cause to regret writing. My earnest prayer is, that your soul may be saved through the merits of Jesus Christ !

‘ Sun of the soul, whose cheerful ray  
Darts on this gloom of life a smile,  
Sweet Hope—yet further gild your way,  
Yet light your weary steps awhile,  
Till thy lamp dissolve in endless day.’

“ JOHN REVETT.”\*

To *Mr. William Corder.*

\* Since receiving the above communication, we have referred to the file of the Ipswich Chronicle, in one of the papers we find that Mr. J. Boutell of Boxford advertises, under the head of *Fraud*,—*A Caution* to the public against taking, or the holders issuing, two promissory notes, signed by him on blank stamps, which he did on the representation of the said John Revett, that it was merely an undertaking to appear in London on a future day, as a witness in causes in which the said John Revett was interested, and *not* for any pecuniary transaction or obligation.

On the 15th of September Revett inserts a long advertisement in reply to the above, which he concludes by stating, that he shall be able to convince the Jury and the public, at the day of his trial, (which will not take place till next March), of his innocence.

Then follows—under the head of Commitments to Bury Gaol—“ John Revett (by the Reverend C. Cooke, and the Reverend J. Gee Smyth,) charged with having forged a promissory note, with intent to cheat and defraud Mr. Jonathan Boutell of Boxford, in this county.”

The next post conveyed another letter from the same gentleman, which forms, perhaps, the concluding link in the chain of mystery with which this narrative abounds, from beginning to end. We give Mr. Orridge's own words:—

“ *Gaol, Bury St. Edmund's,*  
*Sept. 16th, 1828.* ”

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ What strange coincidences happen!—I walked up to the Post-Office, last night, to put in *John Revett's* letter to Corder (as you expressed a desire to have it.) On my return home, I found a post-chaise at the door, with the same John Revett committed to my custody for forgery.

“ The offence with which he stands charged is forging a promissory note for one hundred pounds, with intent to cheat, &c. &c.

‘ I am, dear Sir,

“ Your obedient Servant,

“ JOHN ORRIDGE.”

To *Mr. J. C.*

\* \* \* There appears to us to be considerable mystery about Revett's letter, and we are left to conjecture from what motive it was sent, or, rather, what was the spring of action to induce it to be penned. We believe, that no previous acquaintance existed between Corder and the young man who is now committed to the same gaol upon a charge which affects his own life. So far as the contents of the letter go, they may be considered—as the writer professes,—a well-meant effort to do good; but we cannot help asking (for we are ignorant of the fact) was he conscious of his guilt at the time? or, in other words, had he committed the offence with which he stands charged? If he had, we trust (should a conviction take place) that he will act upon the advice which he so gratuitously bestowed on one who was going to ascend the fatal platform in the course of a few hours. We have been informed that Revett is a person of considerable expectations; but of a very eccentric turn of mind. Deviations like these, from the path of rectitude, hold out an important lesson to every one. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”



## ANECDOTES OF CORDER.

When Corder first went to live at Grove House, Ealing, he kept very much within doors, scarcely ever going off the premises, not even to church, although his wife was a constant attendant at divine service, and the pupils of the school which she conducted, were regularly brought to Ealing church every Sunday under her immediate superintendence\*.

He seldom went to London, though on one or two occasions, about Christmas, he was obliged to go to town to meet the parents of some of his wife's pupils. On those occasions he invariably went armed with the pistols which Lea the officer deposed to having found at Grove House, and which were the same, or one of them at least, with which the murderer confessed he dispatched the ill-fated Maria Marten.

His real motives in these precautions were not even then surmised, but he used to tell his wife, that they were adopted for the purpose of guarding against attacks of footpads or other dangerous characters, on his return from town, as he was accustomed to take, on his way to and from London, the long footpath which leads from the small lane off the Oxford road at Turnham Green, by the Woolpack public house, through the fields, to Ealing Churchyard and Brentford lane. But it may now be conjectured that he had other motives for those precautionary steps—motives which he dared not even divulge to the wife of his bosom. It was very fortunate that the capture was so wisely and cautiously made by Lea,—since if he had en-

\* Throughout this history we have been as careful as possible to avoid speaking of this unfortunate woman, but there are instances wherein it becomes indispensably necessary in order to preserve the thread of our narrative.

deavoured to arrest him on his way to Grove House, another murder might have stained the hands of the wretched man \*.

There was one peculiarity, in which he was fond of indulging whenever he walked out alone, and that was his general practice—he seemed particularly pleased at meeting children, whom he used to pat on the head apparently with the greatest familiarity and kindness. It is not for us to ascribe motives, but there are perhaps reasonable grounds to suppose, that at these times recollections of his infant child and of Maria Marten used to press upon him, for, as we have before stated, our opinion is that he hastened both their lives to a premature close.

The very day before Corder's apprehension he walked out towards Brentford, and took some children, whom he had met, into a small fruit-shop, where he bought some oranges which he divided amongst them †.

There is one fact which we forgot to mention in its proper place, and which formed part of the con-

\* How much is the callousness of Corder's mind exemplified by his keeping the murderous weapons in his constant possession!—Providence permitted it, however, that they might eventually become evidences of his guilt.

† About the period of Corder's apprehension, a great deal was said in all the public journals relative to attempts made by him to destroy *Thomas Henry Marten*, the only surviving child of its wretched mother, by presenting it with pears, figs, &c. &c. in which were inserted *poisonous pills*, (vide page 356,) but which the child refused to partake of. While at Polstead I several times questioned Mrs. Marten upon these statements: she acknowledged having made them, and that they were correct. With regard to the nature or quality of the pills, however, she could not speak, and the circumstance would perhaps have been entirely forgotten, but for the catastrophe which followed bringing it to her mind. As no mention was made of this circumstance at the trial (indeed it would have been irrelevant,) we decline making further remark, but leave our readers to their own conjectures.—Ed.



versation between Corder and Lea the officer, on the road from Polstead to Bury. Corder addressed the officer to the following effect—"I am glad it is coming so near to a close—I have never had one happy day since it happened, but yet I am glad that so long a space intervenes between my committal and my trial, so that I may prepare for death. I will employ my time in reading and writing, and hope I shall be kept from the companionship of other prisoners as much as possible, as I do not wish to learn any more wickedness—sin has been my ruin."—he said in conclusion, "I suppose there will be others there (in Bury gaol,) who will *die as well as myself*\*."

---

#### THEATRICAL NOTICES OF THE FATE OF CORDER.

It may very likely appear an incongruity of no inconsiderable magnitude by many of our readers, that some of the subjects and matters, so discordant in their nature, should be introduced into this history,—and why connect the stage with the pulpit may be the interrogatory?—We answer, that our aim being to turn to moral account the History we have compiled, we are careless from what source we obtain information and observations which may be made

\* This was more than tantamount to a confession, and he would have said much more, but Lea, with his usual prudence, cautioned him lest he (Lea) should be called upon to prove the conversation at the trial. We cannot help observing, that it would be very commendable in police officers, were they to abstain as much as possible from conversing with prisoners whom they apprehend, and more especially from asking them questions or commenting on the nature of the offence of which they are suspected. At the last Old Bailey Sessions, Mr. Justice Gazelee gave an important caution upon this subject, that prisoners must not be entrapped into a confession.

subservient to that great object;—and provided this be achieved, we are heedless of any censures on our work as to ill-adaptation of parts, or want of symmetry.

We have perused a melo-drama called *The RED BARN, or the Mysterious Murder*, and have witnessed its stage effect at the Royal Pavilion, Mile-End Road: we consider the piece admirably got up, and creditable to the talents of Mr. West Digges, the author. Subjoined are a few of the most striking passages, all of which having been founded on real life, cannot be objected to on the score of morality.

ACT I.—Scene 1st.

[*After promising an immediate Marriage, MARIA withdraws, and leaves CORDER to his soliloquy.*]

CORDER.—How well this pent up soul assumes the garb of smiling love to give my fiend-like thoughts the prospect of success!—the deed were bloody, sure, but I will do't, and rid me of this hated plague:—her very shadow moves a scorpion in my sight! I loathe the banquet I have fed upon!—by heaven—

[*Enter Dame MARTEN and MARIA.*]

—Hah! what has detained thee, love?—Mother, wished to speak to thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

ACT I.—Scene 2nd. (*Village Landscape.*)

[*Enter CORDER.*]

CORDER.—Am I turned coward, or what is't makes me tremble thus? Have I not heart sufficient for the deed, or do I falter with remorse of conscience? No, by heaven and hell, 'tis false,—a moment, and I launch her soul into Eternity's wide gulf,—the fiends of hell work strong within me,—'tis done!—I'll drown my fears and slake my thirst for vengeance in her blood!—Who's there?—hah! 'tis no one,—and yet methought I heard a footstep;—How foolish are those startling fears! Come, shroud me, demons! hide, hide my thoughts within your black abyss!—The Red Barn is the spot I've fixed on to complete my



purpose,—everything is ready to inhume the body—that disposed of, I defy detection;—now for the cottage.—

\* \* \* \* \*

Scene 4.—*Exterior of the Barn*—CORDER watching for the approach of MARIA.

CORDER.—How dreadful the suspense each moment brings!—would it were over.—There's not a soul abroad, everything favours my design.—This knocking at my heart doth augur fear, but 'tis a faint and foolish fear that must not be—suspicion's self will sleep, aye sleep for ever. Yet—'twixt thought and action—how harrowed is the brain with wild conjecture! The burning fever playing round my temples gives to this livid cheek a deeper hue, screening from human sight the various workings of my soul within—hark!—by heaven she comes. Now, all ye fiends of hell! spur me to the deed—give me to feel nor pity, nor remorse! Let me but shew some cause of quarrel for the act, and smooth with cunning guile my fell resolve, that it may seem less bloody in the execution,—hold, hold, she's here—

[Enter MARIA.]

— I fear, Maria, the Magistrates are on the watch—were you observed upon the way,—sure, quite sure you passed unnoticed?

\* \* \* \* \*

ACT II.—Scene 1st.

*Exterior of the Red Barn.—After committing the Murder, enter CORDER with a pickaxe (hurried and agitated.)*

CORDER.—Why do I start at every sound I hear, and fancy into life what the disturbed and tortured mind proclaims is but the vision of my dream?—Methought, oh, horrid, dread reality!—methought all pale and bleeding I beheld my victim's form, her little infant clinging to the spot from whence her mother's life-blood gushed, seeming to imbibe reanimation, while weltering in the gory wound. Oh! awful agony of thought!—but calm thee, calm thee, my soul—Lie still, foul conscience! give me, give me but the veil of innocence to hide my guilt. I must dispose of the body,—consign it deep within the barn—'twere easy

done, all then will be at rest ; no clue remain to risk discovery. Now, now then for the Barn—Oh, my God ! I dread to approach it !

[*Exit.*

\* \* \* \* \*

ACT II.—Scene 2d.

*Interior of MARTEN's Cottage. DAME discovered apparently fatigued.*

DAME.—Bless me, how fatigued I feel—the hard exertions of the day are o'er, and I would fain restore my spirits by an hour's repose. The sultry heat of noon is past, and a calm eve of languor creeps throughout the frame ; my child, my Maria, is happy before this time, and her poor mother lies down in peace, content and satisfied.

[*She sinks into a chair—as DAME sleeps, the scenes are drawn gradually off, and through a gauze curtain is seen the interior of the Red Barn, and CORDER with a pickaxe burying the body.—During the scene, DAME's sleep becomes disturbed, and at last she arises from her chair in great agitation, and rushes to the front of the stage, when the flats are drawn on, and the scene closes gradually.*]

DAME.—Help ! help ! my child ! I saw her, sure, lifeless, smeared with blood !—'twas in the Red Barn !—and there stood Corder, with a pickaxe digging out her grave. But no, no, no, 'twas all a dream ! I have been sleeping,—thank God, thank God ! it is so,—but oh ! how frightful ; 't has harrowed up my soul with fear.

[*Enter THOMAS MARTEN, ANNE and GEORGE hastily ; DAME screams on seeing them.*

MARTEN.—What's the matter, wife ? how came you to scream so ? has anything alarmed you ?

ANNE.—Speak, dear mother, why do you look so pale ?

DAME.—I saw her in the Red Barn, gashed with wounds !

MARTEN.—Saw whom ? oh 'tis folly ! you have been dreaming—whom did you see ?

DAME.—Maria, my child Maria ! there has been murder—But what, what am I saying ! my senses surely wander ; my mind is sore disturbed.

ANNE.—Dear mother, compose yourself, sit down.

MARTEN.—Let me know, Dame, tell us what occurred ;



dreams are sure prognostics of some great event: but once I did not believe so.

DAME.—I will—Bless me, I am all of a tremor: you must know that I sat myself down in this very chair, overpowered with fatigue, and fell asleep—To be sure 'twas nothing but a foolish dream; still methought I saw within the Red Barn, our child, Maria, covered with blood, murdered and stretched on the ground; beside her, with a pickaxe, stood William Corder! but, oh dear me, 'twas but a dream!

MARTEN.—Go on, Dame, for heaven's sake proceed!

DAME.—Well, well, I will—He then, I thought, seized my dear child by the silken handkerchief she wore around her neck, and dragged her body close to the spot he had been digging, and was in the act of consigning it within the horrid grave he just had made, when in my phrenzy and my horror I awoke.

MARTEN.—How strange! and yet—but no, no—come, wife, banish those timid fancies, we must not for a foolish dream give way so. Anne, assist and lead your mother to the air. Maria, our dear child, will be here to-morrow, and then——

DAME.—Never! she never will return; but what, what am I saying? my brain is distracted—

MARTEN.—Gently, dame, gently,—come with me.

DAME.—Thomas, promise me you'll go to the Barn and inquire at what time they set off; 't will ease this wretched heart.

MARTEN.—Well, well, I'll do it to please you, but rest assured that they are by this time on the road to London. I know the heart of Corder well,—he is a rough, but honest fellow.

[Enter GEORGE.]

GEORGE.—Do you know, father, I saw William Corder just now going across the field which leads to Phœbe Stowe's cottage with a pickaxe across his shoulder, (*Dame screams and faints\**). I thought, father, that he was gone to London with sister, but I'm sure it was him.

MARTEN.—You are mistaken, child, it could not be.

GEORGE.—Indeed I am not, father, for he had his velvet jacket on, and look'd round several times, so I got a full view of him, but he could not see me.

MARTEN.—How strange is all this!—my boy's account

\* *Vide* the evidence of George Marten on the trial.

strengthens his mother's dream, so that I do startle, shake, tremble like an aspen leaf to know the truth—Great God! should aught have happened to my child, if—but hold, hold,—come, wife, come, children, help thy mother. I'll this instant to the Barn. *[Exit.*

## ACT II.—Scene 3d.

*[Interior of CORDER's House at Brentford.]*

CORDER.—Last night my rest was sore disturbed by a distressful, horrid dream, the thoughts of which I cannot banish from my remembrance—Methought I saw Maria Marten's form arrayed in white, close to her father's cottage; twice she seemed to pause, and cast her eyes towards the Red Barn.—I saw no more,—dreams oft denote some hidden truth, and I am given to credit them.—Were it not that all is so secure, and rank suspicion lull'd into a dead repose, by heaven, this soul might take th' alarm!—but no, she sleeps for ever, and dreams are but the fleeting visions of a troubled mind,—no more! *(Knock outside.)* Who's there?  
*[Enter SERVANT.]*

SERVANT.—A stranger, Sir, is coming up the garden, who has been inquiring for you

CORDER *(uneasy.)*—A stranger inquiring for me! who! where! ha! *(looking out of the window)*—I'll retire—say I'm not at home, nor know you when I will—*(as he is going, enter LEA the officer, who stops him\*.)*

The following is a very affecting scene.

*[MARTEN, after discovering the body of his murdered Daughter, thus addresses his Wife, who attempts to comfort him.]*

MARTEN.—I'll hear no more, dame, leave me to myself—'tis over, past, and I'm a broken-hearted man.

DAME MARTEN.—But, Thomas, where's that fortitude you boast so much of?

MARTEN.—Fortitude!—who,—where,—shew me the father who can behold his murdered child, and not betray his feelings,—my poor Maria,—and has the old man lived to see it?

\* The character of Lea was effectively personified by Mr. Vaughan.



DAME to ANNE.—Try, Anne,—see if you can yield him any comfort,—for me to 'tempt it is in vain.

MARTEN (*in dreadful agony.*)—The child of all I loved the most, now torn for ever from my arms,—oh!

ANNE.—Hold, dear father, you have a daughter who yet will make you happy.

MARTEN.—Never—never.—I loved you all, but she,—she was the darling of my age, the prop of my existence,—the hope which blest me,—I—I thought the evening of my life should set in peace, and the English Cottager's fire-side be circled with his little family, happy and content; but a villain—a damned and treacherous villain has blasted all my hopes—robbed me of my child—my Maria,—my poor Maria—and savagely murdered her.—(*Becomes frantic.*)

DAME.—Oh! heaven support me. (*Sinks into a chair.*)

MARTEN.—Look to your mother, child (*kneels*). Great God, let thy just vengeance light upon the monster—deliver him into the hands of justice—shew no mercy for the bloody deed.—Let not those glorious laws, the brightest pearls which gem our Monarch's throne, and dear to every Briton's heart, be thus outraged, and the great tie which links us to society be thus basely violated.

ANNE.—Father—dear father,—

MARTEN.—I took him to my arms, foster'd him, call'd him my son—and, as he led my poor Maria from this humble roof, I cried “Heaven bless thee!”—Yes, I gave the murderer of my child my blessing, a poor old father's blessing—Oh! God of Nature, shield me, or I shall sure go mad.

ANNE.—Your poor Anne will comfort you, and do all she can to make you happy.

MARTEN.—I know it, my child, I know it, but then my poor Maria—hah!—I see her now before me, mangled and bleeding, pointing to her gory wounds. Oh! what a sight for an old heart-broken father—she beckons me,—my child, my dear Maria, thy father's coming, he will revenge thee, child,—he will revenge thee.—(*Rushes out in a state of distraction.*)

LAST SCENE.—(*CORDER's Cell in Bury Jail.*)

CORDER.—Life's fleeting dream is closing fast, and the great conflict gainst the which I warr'd with God and man is now upon the wane—all earthly hopes are fled—this bosom is a waste, a wilderness; a blank in the creation

*Sin*, fell, remorseless *sin* hath blighted all my hopes, and left me desolate—a very wretch, fit prey for the unletter'd hangman——A short, short hour, and Oh! the great account I have to render freezes up my soul, so that I grow sick, and long to taste oblivion's cup, though poisoned with my crime—I'll sleep, perhaps her potent spell may lull me to repose—(*He sleeps.*)

[*Enter Ghost of MARIA.*]

GHOST.—Canst thou, murderer, hope that sleep, soft, balmy sleep, can e'er be thine? Look on thy victim who adored thee, pale, cold, and lifeless,—see, see from whence her life's blood gush'd.—William, William, thy poor Maria pities, pities and forgives her murderer!

(*The Ghost vanishes—CORDER rushes from his pallet, and falls upon his knees.*)

CORDER.—I come—shield, mercy, pardon, pity, spare me, spare me,—(*Ghost again appears*)—Hence! avaunt! thou art not of this earth—Vision, hence I say, begone! I know thee not—ha! what! vanished, whither—but no,—she's there again—spectre shade, Maria, Mari, Mar, Ma, M, (*vanishes*)—gone—gone—no sound, all quiet!—where, where am I?—oh, my God, 'tis but the dark, dark image of my soul doth haunt me,—'twas, 'twas but a dream.—Guilt, guilt, I cannot hide thee,—there, (*throws down a paper*) there is my confession—I am, I am her murderer! \*

[*Executioner and Officers enter.*]

\* \* \* \* \*

\* Having seen all the characters in *propria persona*, in real life, with the exception of the hapless victim, we feel bound to state that the *Corps Dramatique* sustained them with great effect. We think that no person could have been found to personify *Corder*, in stature, voice, gait, and manner equal to Mr. Harding. Farmer Marten was sustained by Mr. Saker in an admirable manner; and Mrs. H. Beverly played Anne Marten with great effect; and every one who has seen the *real* Anne can appreciate the similarity of the persons. *Dame Marten* (Mrs. Saker) performed well, but we wish her attitude had not been so aspiring, because she would then have been more like the person she represented.—ED.

There being something laughable connected with the fol-



In addition to the representation at the Royal Pavilion, *Melo Dramas* and a series of similar pieces were performed at other of the Metropolitan Minor Theatres, one of which was under the title of "*Advertisement for Wives.*"

The country managers have not been unmindful of this "deed of dreadful note," inasmuch as by "a bill of fare," with which we have been favoured, it is ascertained that the proprietors of the Theatre Royal, Weymouth, announced that "A New Melo Drama, founded on facts, will be presented, entitled *The RED BARN*, or the Gipsy's Curse!! embracing every particular of the late Mysterious Murder; at the same time everything revolting to human nature will be omitted, the names altered, and all personalities avoided; but yet offering to the rising generation a moral lesson, showing the working of the conscience on a mind loaded with guilt, and that wickedness always meets its just reward."

---

lowing anecdote, we feel induced to give it, because it goes to prove the *intense anxiety relative to this man's fate*.

"The tragedy of Macbeth was acted at a provincial town not far from Bury on the evening of the day of Corder's execution, and among the audience was a gentleman who had travelled a very considerable distance to witness the death of the murderer. Such was the belief of numbers to the very last, that Corder would not suffer the extreme penalty of the law, that on the return of the spectator, he was completely pestered on all sides for an account of the melancholy spectacle. So much so, that he resolved to go to the theatre and spend the evening, and thus avoid these importunities. Just as he entered the theatre, the fourth scene of the tragedy was commencing, (as he went at half price;) and while taking his seat in the box near the stage, Duncan began, in the words of the author, as usual, "Is execution done on Cawdor?" "Yes, Sir," said the gentleman, supposing the genius of inquisitiveness still haunting him, "I saw him hanged this morning; and I'll not answer any more questions about it." The audience were convulsed with laughter at this singular mistake, (which arose from the similarity of the name of Cawdor with that of Corder,) so that it was a considerable time before the performance could be proceeded with.

### A DESULTORY DISCUSSION ON PUBLIC EXECUTIONS.

It is, we think, an unquestionable fact, that within the last ten years the fates of no two criminals have excited more popular feeling than those of Thurtell and Corder, although it is lamentable, that within that space of time, hundreds have expiated their offences by an ignominious death—a striking proof of the prevalence of crime. Many wise and good men are of opinion that the life of criminals should never be taken except in cases of *Murder*.—Tender as we feel on the forfeiture of human life, we confess that we are not so merciful in our opinion, because there are cases of great moral turpitude which demand striking examples. When the chamber of sleep is invaded by daring burglars, who, to prevent detection or opposition, use deadly weapons against their drowsy and unarmed victims whom they leave almost dead, we consider such desperadoes only a shade better than murderers\* ; and we consider those who deliberately cut and maim, *with intent* to kill, may be classed with the before-named characters.

Again, we consider *Arson* to be a crime nearly

\* At the Bury Assizes two prisoners were tried the day before Corder, for a burglary, attended with cruelties of a most atrocious description. When they broke into the bed-room of the prosecutor (who was upwards of eighty years old), he attempted to make an alarm, upon which one of the villains struck him over the forehead with the sharp part of a heavy *hammer-hatchet* (used in kitchens), and rendered him senseless. The weapon fortunately took an oblique direction, and did not penetrate the skull, but stripped the skin off the temple and forehead, so that his life was in considerable danger for some weeks. These men were convicted capitally ; but as a little boy, the son of one of the prisoners, was the principal witness against them, Mr. Baron Alexander spared their lives, upon the humane consideration,



allied to murder. Those who commit this offence are generally either actuated by malice, or a desire of gain. A person, for instance, imbibes a prejudice against his neighbour, or his employer, and in order to wreak his vengeance, sets fire to his dwelling, careless whether the fatal match may cause, not only the destruction of property, but also the life of his victim,—and that of how many other of his fellow-creatures he cannot tell:—the latter remark will also apply to those who, from sordid motives, set fire to their premises with a view to enrich themselves by defrauding the Fire Insurance Offices. These offences, together with two others which we have in our view, but forbear mentioning, because they are repugnant to human nature, we think (as the Legislature enact) ought to be treated with great severity.\*

Notwithstanding these remarks, we yet think (we speak it with great deference) that executions are too frequent, and consider that the judgment is *unequal*, when a poor wretch, who in the hour of need and of temptation passes a forged one pound note, is doomed to suffer death—whereas a well-paid clerk

that the child should not be upbraided in future years with causing his father to suffer an ignominious death—but for this reason only, the Learned Judge said, he should most assuredly have left them for execution. The prisoners, who were remarkably athletic men, and had long been the terror of their neighbourhood, were transported for life.

\* The case of Smith, who set fire to his house in Newgate Street, for which he was tried at the Old Bailey a few years ago, and acquitted for want of evidence, is a striking proof of the power of conscience. When this miserable incendiary lay upon his death-bed in one of the metropolitan workhouses, he confessed his guilt, and added, that lest his wife, who was privy to it, should betray him, he infused a deleterious drug in some porter she drank with him in Newgate, and by that means deprived her of existence before the day of his trial.

or servant who takes advantage of the trust reposed in him by his confiding master, and robs him of hundreds of pounds, (perhaps reduces him to bankruptcy and ruin,) is only sentenced to banishment to a foreign land where he may live upon his ill-gotten plunder.

It has been asserted that the execution of criminals should not be public, inasmuch as it causes a number of dishonest, licentious, and depraved beings to congregate around the gallows. It should be remembered, however, that if the majority who witness these melancholy “exhibitions” are of the class alluded to, there are *some*, perhaps very *many*, of a different description. The great object which the Legislature have in view in holding up these examples, is to impress the beholders with a conviction of the consequences of crime—that “the wages of sin is death;” and there can be no doubt that many youths, nay, adults too, have learnt a moral lesson fraught with greater importance, (because more lasting) by attending the solemnities of a court of justice, and witnessing an awful spectacle like that to which we allude, than could have been inculcated by the most eloquent disquisition upon the duties of life.—*Example* has ever been deemed superior to *precept*.

It should be also remembered that our Legislature do not differ, in this respect, from all civilized nations: for we believe that, with the exception of those countries where the Inquisition exists, criminals, whether against the state or the subject, who are doomed to die, suffer the penalty of the law in public—indeed public policy as well as public justice demand that it should be so, for many reasons which might be assigned. The great end of punishment is to enforce example,—or why is the dunce, or offending school-boy chastised, or placed upon a form, with a cap of degradation on his head, in the midst of all



his schoolfellows, but to warn the latter against doing what is wrong or to excite them to the desire of obtaining knowledge?—Why is a deserter or a refractory soldier flogged in the presence of the whole garrison, but that others may be taught subordination by his sufferings and example?

There is another subject connected with this dreadful branch of judicial enactment, which frequently forms the topic of observation; we allude to the spiritual attention paid to criminals condemned to death. It appears to be the opinion of many, that because a man has brought himself to the lowest state of degradation by his transgressions against society, that he should therefore be cut off from spiritual warning and instruction, as though it were impossible for such a one to repent—so however thinks not the legislator, the divine, or the philanthropist. Some there are who scoff at the idea of a criminal becoming a penitent, and ridicule those who attempt to render him such\*. It would be well to remember, that the day may come when either they themselves, or their sons, or brothers, may be placed in a similar situation—and then let them ask themselves how they would like to be immured in a gloomy cell, and be there deprived of moral

\* A very few years ago W. H. was executed in front of Newgate, for uttering a forged five pound note; within an hour of his suffering he addressed the writer of this article,—“You recollect me, Sir?”—“Yes, I do,”—“Do you remember about four months ago, being at the ——tavern, St. John Street Road, when I put many impertinent questions to you relative to two men (naming them) who had that day been executed for passing bad notes?”—“I do remember it; but, Sir, your time is short, go to the ordinary and listen to his instructions.”—“His instructions!—ha! those I despised on the night in question, and you took me to task for my levity; but I must tell you, before we part, that on that very day I passed the note for which I am going to suffer—Now I feel the value of religious advice, and I owe much to Mr. Cotton, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Wontner.—Oh! that I could be executed within the prison!—the thought of being a gazing stock unnerves me.”—Ed.

and religious instruction, and led to exclaim, "no man careth for my soul." The mercy of God is not confined within the narrow bounds of human ken, but his grace can as easily be displayed in a gloomy prison, as in a glittering palace, or gorgeous temple; and, doubtless, there are many who, though confined in a cell, have been taught to loathe the nature as well as the *consequences* of transgression. What reason, we would ask, is there why man, sinful man, whose crimes would, if discovered, perhaps bring him to a similar judgment—why should he desire to shut the doors of heaven against the unhappy being to whom the pale of liberty and life is for ever closed in this world? Let such attend to the following lines written by a youthful poet, in reference to a penitent convict.

"When Faith descends upon her wings of love,  
Cheers the droop'd soul, and points to realms above,  
Then firm his glance, hush'd every groan and cry,  
*And HYPOCRITES might shake to view a felon die.*"

R. MONTGOMERY,

---

### LEGAL PROLIXITIES.

The Bill of Indictment upon which Corder was arraigned, has been deemed a masterpiece of forensic skill; nevertheless, the various and contradictory counts which it contained may be judged as a fair specimen of what indictments generally are, and which are often only rendered thus prolix in order to increase the number of folios.

An enlightened Pleader gives, in the following



lines, a tolerably correct notion of a declaration in an action for assault and battery :—

“THE PLEADINGS state—that John-a-Gull,  
 With envy, wrath, and malice, full,  
 With swords, knives, sticks, staves, fist, and bludgeon,  
 Beat, bruised, and wounded John-a-Gudgeon.  
 FIRST COUNT. For that with divers jugs,  
*To wit*, twelve pots, twelve cups, twelve mugs,  
 Of certain vulgar drink, called Toddy,  
 Said Gull did sluice said Gudgeon’s body :  
*To wit*, his gold-laced hat, and hair on,  
 And clothes which he had then and there on :  
*To wit*, twelve jackets, twelve surtouts,  
 Twelve pantaloons, twelve pair of boots ;  
 Which did thereby much discompose  
 Said Gudgeon’s mouth, eyes, ears, and nose,  
 Back, belly, neck, thighs, feet, and toes ;  
 By which, and other wrongs unheard of,  
 His clothes were spoiled, and life despaired of.”

ANSTEY’S *Pleader’s Guide*.

During the present year, (1828,) a young man and woman were put to the bar, at the Old Bailey Sessions, upon an indictment which charged them with stealing twelve Bank of England notes of the value of 10*l.* each ; twelve ditto, value 5*l.* each ; twelve ditto, value 2*l.* each ; twelve ditto, value 1*l.* each ; twelve pieces of gold coin, called sovereigns ; twelve half-ditto ; twelve crowns ; twelve half-crowns ; twelve shillings, and twelve sixpences. The prisoners were further charged with stealing twelve pounds of meat ; twelve pounds of bread ; twelve pounds of butter ; twelve pounds of cheese ; and twelve pounds of a number of et ceteras.

The learned Counsel, who appeared for the prosecution, made some ludicrous remarks upon the unnecessary prolixity of the indictment. The first was, that the prosecutor was a gentleman well known in a certain branch of the legal profession ;

but his knowledge of criminal law was very slight. Hence, he employed one whom he thought better versed in these matters. The facts of the case against the prisoners were briefly these:—The female prisoner lived servant with the prosecutor, and such was the confidence placed in her, that when the family went out of town, upon an autumnal excursion, the house and all the property were left in her care.

It appeared that an intimacy existed between her and the male prisoner; but whether it was formed during the absence of the prosecutor, did not appear; he (the Counsel) would be able to show, that the young man not only took his meals at the house, but he did more; that, however, the other female servant would explain.

It was due to the young man to state, that there was no suspicion that he ingratiated himself with the girl in order to rob the house, as nothing was missing—and the whole charge dwindled down to the fact of his partaking of the food of the prosecutor, against the statute\*.

\* We have often thought that persons who are possessed of large establishments, containing valuable property, act with extreme incaution, when they leave the whole for weeks and months in the care of sometimes only one, and seldom more than two female servants; and it is of little consequence whether those domestics be young or old, as either are fair game for the insinuating thief, or the midnight plunderer, as the recent case of Mrs. Jeffs abundantly testifies.

On the other hand, servants who are left in a situation like this, should ever remember the trust which is reposed, and the awful responsibility which rests upon them, and carefully refrain from forming new acquaintances, and, above all, never permit their visits.

Many incautious girls have done this, in consequence of specious representations of the pretended lover, and have, at length, been induced to betray their trust, and are ruined for ever. Still worse, they may, as several have within the last twenty years, be prosecuted as participators in the crime, and finish a life, which might have been spent in virtue and in peace, on the platform in front of Newgate!



The female prisoner's fellow-servant, with great flippancy, declared that on two or three occasions the man partook of supper with them—and beyond this, that they were very amorous. The witness said she was not influenced by chagrin, because Betsy had a beau, and she had none ;—but she confessed, in her cross-examination, that sometimes she was led to exclaim—

“ O, dear ! what will become of me,  
O, dear ! what shall I do ?  
There's nobody coming to marry me,  
Nobody's coming to woo.”

We need scarcely inform our readers that the prisoners (who were sweethearts) were acquitted.

---

#### A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND MISFORTUNES OF MRS. CORDER.

OF the early part of the life of this unhappy female we know but little, excepting that, by her own expression used when her husband was apprehended, she once lived at the Red Lion at Brentford, of which respectable inn her father was the proprietor. We have been informed that Mr. Moore (her father) was celebrated for his excellent skill in the art of breaking blood horses, and in consequence was generally employed by noblemen to train their favourite colts. By this and other occupations, he is said to have accumulated considerable wealth, by which he was enabled at his death to render his widow independent, and leave his children some property.

At an early age Miss Moore was placed in one of the best seminaries in the western part of London, where she received an excellent education, it being

the intention of her parents to qualify her for becoming a governess in a noble family, or, in failure of that, to be enabled to conduct a seminary on her own account.

After she had completed her education, she became preceptress in a family, with whom she went to France, and remained some time on the continent. On her return, the lease of a house was purchased in Gray's Inn Terrace, where she opened a boarding-school, and where she was residing when she unfortunately became acquainted with Corder. Our readers are already made acquainted with the remarkable manner in which this intimacy and ultimate alliance originated. Corder, it would seem, assured her that he was a person of considerable property, having at least an income of 400*l.* a year; but whether this representation was an inducing motive for her to listen to his demand of her hand in marriage is a matter of conjecture. Shortly after their union, Corder and his wife heard that there was a school in Ealing Lane to be disposed of, kept by a Mrs. Ingleton. A negotiation was immediately set on foot, and the result was, that Mrs. Ingleton agreed to Corder's terms, and stipulated to vacate the school in his favour, and he almost immediately removed thither from Gray's Inn Terrace, and took possession of the premises, which are very extensive, and admirably adapted to the purpose of a ladies' seminary. We need scarcely say, that it was in this house that Corder lived, retired, for several months, and where at length the arm of offended justice arrested him.

Mrs. Corder is frequently troubled with deafness, but her manners are naturally lively, though not volatile; her habits are religious, and her disposition excellent. She is remarkably attached to the Church of England, and during her residence at Gray's Inn Terrace, used to attend at Bloomsbury



Church, St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, and Clerkenwell Church, alternately, three times every Sunday.

It was indeed her regular attendance upon divine worship, which distinguished her in the circle of her acquaintance more than any other feature in her character.

That Mrs. Corder's mind was deeply imbued with religious feeling, there can be no doubt, when we consider the fortitude with which she bore the stroke that severed her from her husband for ever; a husband whom she tenderly loved. This feeling is said to have been instilled into her by her pious mother when she performed the delightful task of teaching "the young idea how to shoot." There cannot be a doubt, but that, like every other person, she was fallible, and on one occasion acted with extraordinary imprudence, and in opposition to the advice of her nearest friends; nevertheless be it remembered, that she had arrived at a state of maturity; and we cannot help observing, that however imprudent the act was to which we allude, it by no means affects her moral character. Poor woman! she has within a few short months suffered sufficiently for her incautiousness, being ruined in "mind, body, and estate."

There is one thing connected with this unfortunate woman, which is deserving the attention of adult females, whether *married* or *single*, and particularly the former; she appears to have kept the marriage vow inviolate—that solemn vow, plighted at the altar of God, when she said, "I Mary take thee William to my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish and OBEY, till death us do part, &c. &c."—Just let us look at her conduct from the day of his apprehension, to that of his execution, and we shall discover boundless kind-

ness, conjugal love, a forsaking of worldly advantage to follow him to prison, and enduring fidelity even to the last fatal moment!—When she first heard the accusation, she spurned it as a base attempt to disturb her connubial bliss—when she discovered that there was some ground for that accusation, she exhorted him to repent if he felt guilt oppress him, and encouraged him to bear up under his calamity, provided *he knew* himself to be innocent.—In one of her letters, addressed to him while in prison, she says, “I have left all to follow you, through evil as well as good report.”—She went further than this: for she rendered herself subservient to the will of her husband, as is exemplified in another letter, where she shews the necessity of her leaving Bury to go to London, in order to settle their affairs:—she adds, that “unless perfectly agreeable to him, she would relinquish her object—but if he consented that she should take the journey, it was for him to fix the day of her return, and she would punctually *obey* his orders,” or, in other words, comply with his wishes.—To the credit of Corder, it will be observed, by referring to “the Prison Correspondence,” (page 332) that he allowed her full liberty to act as she thought proper, with regard to the time of her absence; which, from unforeseen circumstances, might be longer than either of them anticipated. However great the enormity of the previous offences of this miserable man, he certainly appears to have acted with tender affection towards the young lady to whom he became a husband; and although there might appear some eccentricities about his character (arising, no doubt, from his consciousness of guilt), we believe, from the best account which it is possible for an historian to receive, that those who have stated that during the short period they lived together, matrimonial wrangles took place, assert what is utterly unfounded.



Finally, Mrs. Corder at the altar pledged herself to fidelity “till *death* did them part.”—So she did; and, as we have before said, she acted the double part of a wife and Christian monitor—(vide her last visit, page 277). When she uttered the marriage vow, in the presence of God and the congregation, before whom she made the solemn pledge, little did she anticipate that death would so soon separate her from her spouse—much less that the “last enemy” should cut the knot of conjugal bliss, under circumstances to *her* so unexpected—so summary,—so appalling. We have said something in another place about matrimony, but a melancholy case like this induces us again to intreat that youth of either sex should not be hurried by the force of custom, or the whirlwind of passion, to link their destinies for life,—because, next to the salvation of the soul, a happy and permanent marriage is of the last importance.

The conduct of Mrs. Corder at Bury has already been partially detailed, and the letters written to her guilty husband have also been given; further observation upon these points are therefore unnecessary.

After the execution of her wretched husband, Mrs. Corder remained at Bury for several days, inasmuch as the severe shock she had received rendered an immediate removal impracticable, indeed, it was considered by some, that she was prematurely brought to a parturient state. While in this situation we are told, that she relied on the merciful interposition of that Great Being to whom it had long been her daily practice for months to direct the attention of her wretched partner.

As soon as she had sufficiently recovered, she removed to London, in the vicinity of which she remained for some time, and received the consolation so much needed from her pious mother, and other of her friends. After remaining in and near the me-

tropolis for a short time, she set out for Lavenham in Suffolk, with the intention of remaining there until her accouchement \*.

Various were the reports with regard to the finances of this unfortunate woman; and the general opinion was that, in the endeavour to save the life of her husband, she had exhausted the whole of her patrimony, and was left entirely destitute. In order to ascertain the fact, not with a view to gratify an idle curiosity, but, if the necessity appeared, to encourage that benevolent spirit which had already

\* Lavenham was formerly a market town, seven miles N.N.E. of Sudbury, but is now a populous village, situate about midway between Polstead and Bury St. Edmund's. The church, which is situated on an eminence at the west end of the town, is accounted the most beautiful in the county, and which appears to have been refounded by Thomas Spring, surnamed "The Rich Clothier," and his posterity, in conjunction with the Earls of Oxford, whose arms are found with his, in different parts of it. On a small mural monument in the north aisle, are the engraved figures of a man with his wife and six children, under which, in the old English character, is the following inscription:—

"Contynuall prayse these lines in brasse  
Of Allaine Dister here,  
A clothier vertous while he was  
In Lavenham many a yeare.  
For in his lyefe he loved best  
The poor to clothe and feede,  
So with the riche and all the rest  
He neighbourlie agreede;  
And did appoynte before he dyed  
A speciall yearlie rent,  
Which should be every Whitsontide  
Amonge the poorest spent."—

"*Et Obiit Anno Dni. 1534.*"

\* \* \* As in too many other instances, all recollection of this benefaction is now lost; but the parish has to boast of a variety of valuable bequests and endowments.

Not far from Lavenham is Honington, an obscure village, but which will in future be celebrated as the birth-place of the Pastoral Poet, ROBERT BLOOMFIELD from whose "Rural Tales" we have given quotations in another part of this history.



manifested itself, by several donations being sent to the Morning Journals for her benefit, we addressed a letter to Mr. Charnock.

The following answer was received by us. We give it *verbatim*.

*“Raymond’s Buildings, Gray’s Inn.”*

“SIR

“Your letter for Mr. Charnock being addressed ‘Brentford, Middlesex,’ has caused a delay in the delivery, otherwise it would have been replied to much earlier.

“Mr. Charnock is at present out of town, but it is likely we shall be enabled fully to satisfy your inquiries, and shall be happy to give you every information relating to the present circumstances of the unfortunate Mrs. Corder.

“At the time she married Corder, she was possessed of some small personal property, and had a little money in the funds. At the time Mrs. Corder established herself at Ealing, a great part of this money went in the purchase of the lease, fixtures, and furniture of the school.

“As it required a very considerable sum of money to be brought forward preparatory to, and at the defence of Corder, Mrs. C. sold out the remainder of her money in the stocks, and converted almost every thing she had into money for this purpose.

“The money, however, which she was enabled so to raise, was very inadequate for that object, had not the elder Mrs. Corder, of Polstead, come forward, and made a considerable advance on account of her son.

“Mrs. William Corder considered she was bound, by natural ties, to use every exertion to save her husband, and for which the world surely cannot blame her, but by these acts she has reduced herself to the very *last shilling*, and, we believe, is at this moment without the necessary means of purchasing support, and compelled to accept assistance from her friends.

“We do not hesitate to say that Mrs. Corder is an object of commiseration and charity.

“We are, Sir,

“Yours very respectfully,

“APPLEBY AND CHARNOCK.”\*

To Mr. J. C.

\* It will be recollected that, when Corder left Polstead in September, 1827, he could not have had more than from three

Although a different opinion prevailed among some, yet others of the inhabitants of Bury considered Mrs. Corder an object worthy of compassion, in consequence of her inflexible and undeviating attention to the temporal and spiritual wants of her miserable, but, at that time, unconvicted husband. In consequence of this benignant feeling, a gentleman, whose name is honourably mentioned in this work, sent a paragraph, descriptive of Mrs. Corder's situation, to the proprietor of the Suffolk Chronicle, which met a ready insertion, and, in consequence of which, benevolent individuals transmitted small sums, making, we believe, an aggregate of ten pounds or thereabout; and we feel a conviction that the fair sex will not suffer a female to want, inasmuch as, by her precipitate conduct, she has taught them a lesson fraught with instruction, and which may, perhaps, be the means of preserving *some* who, but for her fatal example, *might* have one day fallen into a similar vortex\*.

to four hundred pounds in his possession, which must have been very much diminished by his mode of living during the interval between that time and his marriage. Besides the current expenses of the tavern, he purchased an extensive wardrobe, and linen of a valuable description, and which was discovered by Lea, the officer, when he searched his trunks at Grove House, Ealing.

It appears that Corder told his wife, and her friends, that his income was four hundred pounds a year; and it is conjectured that, in order to keep up the farce a little longer, he had recourse to the act of forgery, by which he realized ninety-three pounds. In his anxiety, when apprehended by Lea, he represented that he had eighty sovereigns in his possession, which was, doubtless, part of the cash he received from Messrs. Alexander and Co., upon the forged check, which, it will be remembered, was uttered not long before his apprehension for the murder of Maria Marten.

\* In page 381, will be found a verbatim copy of a sermon preached by the Reverend George Hughes, the profits arising from the sale of which, we understand this amiable and charitable Divine caused to be paid over to Mrs. Corder.



## MRS. CORDER THE ELDER.

It is said that this venerable lady, whose measure of sorrow must be full to the brim, contemplates leaving that place which was once the pride of her heart, and the delight of her eyes. Whether this be the case or not, she has actually disposed of the live and dead stock on *Crisp Farm*, of which Sir William Rowley, Bart., is the proprietor, and which was some time since in the occupation of John Corder, one of her unfortunate sons, who died of a consumption. It is to be hoped that pity for her sad bereavements will not only shield her from scorn and invidious remarks, but that wherever she spends the few days which remain to her on earth, she will be an object of sympathetic regard.

---

## CORDER'S TRANSGRESSION A PROLIFIC SOURCE OF EVIL TO OTHERS.

It was well observed by a royal penman, that "the beginning of sin is as the letting out of water," and if ever the truth of the assertion was fully exemplified, it is so in the history of the life and death of William Corder the Polstead murderer. In his early years he was signalized for his disregard to truth, and in the end he became a murderer of the worst description; and after that crime had been committed, his juvenile propensity had not forsaken him, for he uttered some of the basest falsehoods in order to cover his transgression, even until the scaffold was erected upon which he was to be exhibited as a spectacle to mankind.

Like his guilty archetype Cain, he committed a

foul and unnatural murder, and then attempted to screen himself from the consequence of his crime, or cover his iniquity by subterfuge and lies. “And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother’s keeper? And he said, what hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.’ Gen. c. iv., ver. 8, 9.

Cain was arraigned—denies the charge—God sits as judge—the blood of the victim cried for vengeance against him—he is convicted, condemned, sentence passed—but he was not doomed to suffer immediate death, but a sort of transportation—“A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.” Corder knew all this by sad experience.

What an accumulated mass of misery (although diversified in its form) has one diabolical act of Corder’s produced, when viewed only superficially in relation to particular persons! Who can tell how far the demoralizing influence thereof may extend through the various ramifications of society?

1st. What has it done for his victim—his doting and confiding mistress—her whom he used to call “My sweet Maria”—she who, upon his solemn pledge, expected to become his wife—upon her he inflicted an injury tenfold more aggravated than upon any other person connected with this tragical event—he destroyed her life, which, if spared, might have exhibited traits of virtue—and when, by her example, she might have atoned to society for the irregularities of which she had been guilty in the morning of her days. The injury done to her is of greater magnitude, because it was irreparable—his cruel hand cut her off, not only in the blossom of her years, but of her sins too, and at once plunged her into eternity without a moment’s warning to implore the blessing of heaven—and, having dispatched



her soul from earth, he deposited her body in a grave, which was as disgraceful and unworthy of her, as it was premature.

2d. In regard to the only surviving child of the victim, he has deprived him of a mother who would hereafter have been his protector and instructor; and well would she have been qualified to caution him, in after-life, against partaking of the intoxicating draughts of sinful pleasure. But by her death, this little engaging boy is left a helpless orphan, in a wide, inhospitable world, entirely dependent upon the bounty or exertions of others. Although this child may hereafter have very indistinct recollections of the features of that beauteous form which once used to caress him; yet, as he hears the *History of the Polstead Murder* unfold the melancholy tale of the disastrous end of his youthful parent, he will bless her memory—perhaps be led to avoid the rock upon which she split—and, moreover, he will, doubtless, execrate the name of the wretch whose savage hand rendered him motherless.

3d. In the next place, how much distress has the disastrous end of Maria brought upon the venerable cottager, Thomas Marten! Those who are fathers have felt the yearnings of nature, when their offspring have been removed from this world in the ordinary course; what then must be the feelings of the mind when a beloved child, the prop of his declining years, is inveigled from him, and savagely murdered by her supposed protector?—No wonder if it ultimately “bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.” Independently of the father, the brothers, sister, and friends of Maria Marten, will ever remember the name of Corder with feelings of abhorrence.

4th. By his transgression he has plunged an

amiable young woman who was lately respectable, pious, and the admiration of the circle in which she moved, into ruin, want, and degradation.

The fond wife who spent her time, talents, and property for his benefit, is left a care-worn widow, before she had tasted the most delicious draught of bridal felicity :—she is left destitute and dependent upon her friends for subsistence, who was so lately surrounded with independence and happiness. *One pledge* she may have left ; but should it be reserved to her, it will only tend to bring to her recollection the melancholy end of its wretched father, and will be a continual source of anxious solicitude. And should that child live, who can calculate upon what reception he may receive in a prejudiced and indiscriminating world, who may iniquitously point at it and say, “ there goes the child of Corder the murderer ! for even in this world, the sins of the parent are oftentimes visited (although very unjustly) upon the unoffending offspring.

5th. Again, by his neglect of parental restraint, and the moral precepts which he received in his youth, he has broken the heart of an aged mother, and driven her to the margin of that sepulchre which has lately, in rapid succession, unfolded its doors to receive numerous others of his kindred. Oh ! what dreadful havoc has one transgression made—life prematurely cut off, the peace of many families for ever destroyed, a village thrown into a ferment, England degraded, and the world astounded by the daring iniquity of an individual !

6th. What have been the consequences of his diabolical act to himself ? We reply, read the History of the Polstead Murder, and behold there that “ the wages of sin is death,” and “ the way of transgressors hard.” Instead of living in the midst of plenty, and surrounded by friends, he has been



deprived of liberty—instead of filling, as he might have done, honourable stations in the sphere of society, in which he seemed destined to move, he was ignominiously dragged to the bar of justice, amid the yells and execrations of an infuriated mob ;—instead of spending his days in peace, arriving at a good old age, and closing his life surrounded by friends, he became “ fit prey for the unlettered hangman,”—and, instead of being “ gathered with his fathers in the family sepulchre,” his body became a subject for the dissecting knife, and his skeleton is placed in a school of anatomy, as a lesson of instruction to youth, who may hereafter study that important science; and will be, moreover, a lasting memento of the just but ignominious end of Corder the Murderer.

7th. *Finally.* Take a view of the financial expenditure consequent upon this single transgression. The very hour that this concluding page was going to press, we were informed that the expense to the County of Suffolk consequent on the prosecution of Corder was two hundred and thirty-five pounds ten shillings ; and the legal charges, on the part of the defence, have been rated at about three times that sum, and which was principally paid out of his wife’s property ; to which may be added, very considerable sums paid for lodgings, travelling expenses, &c. &c. Corder, in many respects, appears to have been sordid as to pecuniary matters ; but, when he committed the foul act for which he suffered, he did not, as the compiler of his “ *life, character, and behaviour,*” now does, FINEM RESPICE !

---

## MONTGOMERY'S POEMS.

IN the preceding pages of this work, we have frequently inserted quotations from "*The Omnipresence of the Deity*," written by the youthful pen of Mr. ROBERT MONTGOMERY. We are glad, in our concluding number, to announce another volume of Poems, published by the same author, which, for bold imagery, fervent pathos, and devotional sentiment, cannot fail to meet with the deserved approbation of his contemporaries, and will no doubt be read with pleasure by generations yet unborn\*.

The following quotation we select, because part of it, at least, is exceedingly consonant with the design of this work. The author is describing a midnight thunder-storm visiting the metropolis of England; and then portrays the miserable end of an unhappy victim of seduction.

"Woe! to the houseless wand'rer doom'd to walk  
Through the drench'd streets, barefooted, or bereft  
Of life's sweet charities, at such an hour.  
Glance down yon gloomy lane!—upon the cold  
And dripping step,—her wet robes clinging round  
Her shrunken form,—a lifeless woman lies,  
With face upturn'd unto the flooding shower.  
Despair has just unlink'd the chain of life,  
And on her cheek the spirit wrestle yet  
Is traced. Her's is a tale of humble woe.  
Approach! and with the lamp-beam learn her fate,  
In mournful lines upon her visage mapp'd;  
A chronicle of sorrow and of sin,  
And shame, whose fountain is a brain of fire,  
A heart for ever on the rack of care,  
Oppression from without, and pangs within,—  
Despair,—then death, the master-cure of woe—  
Survey her features, and you read them all.

"Unhappy maiden! round whose infant days  
A father's prayers their holy influence cast,  
And from whose eyes a mother reap'd delight,—  
Death should have torn thee earlier to the tomb,

\* The volume is entitled, "*A UNIVERSAL PRAYER; Death; A Vision of Heaven; and A Vision of Hell.*" Published by S. Maunders, Newgate Street.



And in thy native churchyard heap'd thy grave  
 Of grassy mound ;—for once along the mead  
 Fleet as the fawn thou boundedst ; bright and fair,  
 The beauties of the valley o'er thy form  
 And features breathed, while in thy glance there shone  
 The magic of an uncorrupted mind :  
 And this is all that now remains of thee !—  
 Thy sorrows hath a page in Heaven's dread book,  
 And when 'tis opened, who shall quail the most,  
 The man who tempted, or the maid who fell ?"—*Death*, p. 72

The poet then contemplates with triumphant anticipation that period when the destruction of the last enemy shall be consummated.

"Thousands of years beneath thy sway have groan'd,  
 Unwearied Death ! how many more shall bear  
 The burden of thy curse—no human tongue  
 Can tell, for they are chronicled in Heaven.  
 Though oft-times numbered by a guilty mind,  
 When thunders, like dead oracles, awake  
 The World. Yet, come it will, however late,  
 That glorious day, when Death himself shall die !  
 When the far sounds of bursting tombs will awe  
 The reeling earth,—when with an angel shout  
 The bless'd will spring into a second birth."—*Death*, p. 75.

We cannot omit to notice the following stanza, where the poet speaks of himself, in sentiments which do credit to his head and his heart.

"I sing of Death ; yet soon, perchance, may be  
 A dweller in the tomb. But twenty years  
 Have wither'd since my pilgrimage began,  
 And I look back upon my boyish days  
 With mournful joy ; as musing wanderers do,  
 With eye reverted, from some lofty hill,  
 Upon the bright and peaceful vale below.  
 Oh ! let me live, until the fires that feed  
 My soul, have work'd themselves away, and then,  
 Eternal Spirit ! take me to thy home !

\* \* \* \* \*

But when  
 The spirit speaks,—or beauty from the sky  
 Descends into my being,—when I hear  
 The storm-hymns of the mighty ocean roll,  
 Or thunder sound,—the champion of the storm,—  
 Then feel I envy for immortal words,  
 The rush of living thought ; oh ! then I long  
 To dash my feelings into deathless verse,

That may administer to unborn time,  
 And tell some lofty soul how I have lived  
 A worshipper of Nature and of Thee.”—*Death*, p. 80, 81.

In his “*Vision of Hell*,” the poet, after describing the self-idolater, the hypocrite, the suicide, &c. &c. whose shades he saw, gives the following account of one, in whom the earthly beatitudes formerly centred:—

“ And who, among the myriads of the cursed,  
 Was that red shape of unconsuming fire,  
 Whose agony, though dumb, was dreadful? Who?  
 One of the vanished earth, by Fortune dower’d  
 With queenly favour. Never on the eye  
 Of life expanding to the glorious world,  
 Did fairer prospects shine! Around her moved  
 The majesty of birth,—the graces breathed,  
 From polished modes, and princely scenes. And, oh!  
 Whoever looked upon that lovely face,  
 Where the soul sunn’d itself in smiles,—or heard  
 The prattled music of her tongue,—nor deemed  
 She was a cherub, born to beam in heaven!

“ Time roll’d her years along; but with them came  
 No thoughts divine, to nurse the growing mind,  
 And tune the passions to their heavenly tone;  
 Ne’er did the voice of pure Instruction charm  
 Her willing ear, nor meek-eyed Wisdom stoop,  
 With fond attention, to each budding thought  
 And sweet demand:—Unto the dew-bright stars  
 Her finger pointed oft—the sun and moon  
 Were shining wonders, and the ocean-roar  
 Went, like a rapture, rolling through her soul,  
 Until her being quaked for joy! Yet none  
 Were by to warm her wonder into praise,  
 And stamp God’s image brighter on the soul;  
 None lock’d her little hands in prayer, and spoke  
 Of Angels that o’erwatch a sinless child.

“ But when at length, a perfect woman dawn’d  
 Upon the world,—the rapture of a dream  
 Ne’er revell’d o’er a lovelier form than she;  
 She was a paragon;—her beauties such  
 As love to bask upon the poet’s page;  
 The starry lustre of her speaking eyes—  
 Her brow—her hair of hyacinthine bloom,  
 And neck of swan-like grace—all seem’d divine—  
 When, with the lightness of a cloud, she walked  
 Her chamber, or amid the ball-room blazed;—



The form was heavenly, but the mind of earth ;  
A shrine for vain-born hopes and sensual dreams,  
Without a thought, a sigh, or wish for Heaven !  
E'en to the last, when on her pain-worn cheek  
The tints of Death were seen, no tender lip  
Reveal'd the coming hour—nor in her heart  
Did Faith's sweet music roll : she was so mild,  
So fair in form, and so ador'd below,  
Sure God would take her to His bowers of light ;—  
So dream'd Compassion's unreflecting heart ;  
But, while the living mourn'd her wing'd to Heaven,—  
Her spirit shudder'd on the way to Hell !”

Without wishing to usurp the province of the reviewer, on the one hand, or incurring the charge of fulsome adulation on the other, we cannot help observing, in reference to Mr. Montgomery, that, when we behold a minor making such rapid strides up the Parnassian Mount, and whose poetic spirit has, in his “ Vision,” even entered “ the heaven of heavens, and held communion with the spirits of just men made perfect ”—when, we say, such a master-spirit bursts forth upon the world in the dawn of life, what may we not augur and expect when his youth is “ *mellowed into manhood*,” and his judgment more fully matured by an extended knowledge of men and things !

## INDEX.

---

*Andrews, Mr.*, his address for the prosecution, 120.

*Alexander, Lord Chief Baron*, his Charge to the Jury, 228  
—remarks thereon, 231.

*Barn, the Red*, a description of, 54—remarks upon sermons preached near it, 54, 394.

———— A melo-drama so entitled,—copious extracts from, 364.

———— or the Gipsy's Curse!! performed at the Theatre Royal, Weymouth, 442.

*Bury St. Edmunds*, arrival of the Judges at, 98—description of, 369—flux of the visitors to, on the morning of execution, 288.

———— gaol, description of, 372.

*Bloomfield, Robert*, the Suffolk pastoral poet,—his birth-place, 457.

*Boldero, John, Esq.*, loyalty of, 370.

*Corder, William*, apprehension of, 13.

———— charged with forgery when at Colchester, on his way to Polstead, 18—arrival at Polstead, 21—removal to Bury Gaol, 34—partial biography of, 71—his trial (1st day), 108—his arraignment, 110. Bill of indictment against him, 111—evidence for the prosecution, 132, (*vide witnesses*)—his *defence*, and observations thereon, 198—his demeanour at the close of the trial, 242—verdict of GUILTY returned against him, 245—sentence of death passed upon him, 247—his return to the gaol, 250—his frivolous conduct in the evening, 255—his last night, 281—induced to a partial confession, 283—copy of confession, 285—his conduct on the morning of execution, 288—devotions at the chapel, 291—sacrament administered to him, 295—Execution, 297—public view of his body, 304—dissection thereof, 306—debates thereon by the surgeons, 307—his advertisement for a wife, 399—final disposal of the skeleton—his transgression, a prolific source of evil, 460.

*Corder, Mrs.*, her visit to her husband after sentence, 258—her final visit, 277.

———— sketch of her life, &c., 452.



*Cook, Joseph*, the murderer anecdote of, 267—singular coincidence, 431.

*Corder, Mrs.*, the elder, and disposal of her farm, 480.

*Coroner's inquest* upon Maria Marten, 9—adjourned ditto, 23—the coroner and the reporters—debates between—justification of, 317.

*Court*, confusion at the opening of, 106—108—adjournment of (1st day), 178—entrance of the judge to, and popular excitement, 185—crowded state of, 110.

*Dream*, discovery of a murder through a, 5.

———, *Mrs. Marten's*, and remarks upon, 364—singular coincidence, 364—remarks upon, 365.

### *Epistolary Correspondence.*

*Corder's, William*, letters to his mother, 15, 349.

———, to George Gardner, 95.

———, to Thomas Marten, 155, 156.

———, to Peter Matthews, Esq., 159, 160.

———, to his wife, 296, 332, 334, 335, 337, 342, 349.

———, to his sister, 340, 359.

———, to Mrs. Moore, 363.

———, to the Rev. Mr. Seaman, 347.

———, to John Baalham, 354.

———, *Mrs.*, letters to her husband, 336, 338, 339, 343, 344, 358, 361.

*Capt. Steadman* to the Overseers of Polstead, 213.

*C. Humphreys, Esq.*, to Mr. Pinter, 181.

———, to Appleby and Charnock, 182.

———, to William Corder, 182.

*Baalham, William*, to Corder, 356.

*Matthews, Peter, Esq.*, to Corder, 161.

*Nairn, J. C.*, upon the dissection, 309 311.

*Orridge, Mr.*, to compiler, 311, 433.

*Creed, Mr.*, to ditto, 312, 315.

*Macintyre, Mr.* to ditto, 315.

*Marten, Maria*, to Miss Savage, 320.

*Sidmouth, Lord*, to Major-General Sir J. Byng, 371.

*Hughes, Rev. G.*, to compiler, 381.

*Revett, John*, to Corder, after his conviction, 431.

*Appleby and Charnock, Messrs.*, to the compiler, 458.

*Letters, matrimonial*, in answer to Corder's advertisement, 399—431.

*Execution*, preparations for, 262—copy of the warrant for, 263—the scaffold and execution, 297.

*Executions, public*, a desultory discussion upon, 445—anecdote of a convict, 448.

*Jury, Grand*, names of, 107—names of Petit ditto, 120.

*Lavenham*, a short glance at, 457.

*Law*, prolixities of, 449.

*Lea, James*, his account of the capture of Corder, 20.

*Marten, Maria*, biography of, 40.

————, funeral of, 61.

————, disinterment of her body, 65.

————, tomb to her memory rejected, 68.

————, her skull produced in Court, 192.

————, *Thomas*, description of his cottage, 53.

*Observations*, preliminary, 1.

————, compiler's, upon Corder's defence, 321.

————, ditto to the ladies, 402.

*Orridge, Mr.*, his statement relative to Corder, 257—Quotes  
5 Geo. IV. cap. 31, sect. 5, 261.

————, statement of, relative to Corder's confession, 311—

Extracts from his description of Bury Gaol, 375—Remarks  
upon his invention of the Tread-mill, 374.

*Old Bailey Sessions*, singular trial at, 450.

*Peasantry*, disgraceful conduct of, 32.

*Polstead Church and Village*, description of, 50, 62—Theatrical  
amusements at the fair, 70.

*Poetry*, 275, 280, 287, 288, 323, 403, 449, 450, 465.

*Phrenology*, remarks upon, 315, 316.

————, Dr. Spurzheim's report upon the cast of Corder, 391.

————, Corder's cast sent to the publisher, 315.

*Robinson, John*, (the murderer) trial and execution of, 2.

*Sermon*, preached near the Red Barn, 54, 394.

————, Assize, preached at St. Mary's, Bury, 99.

————, in Bury Gaol, 103.

————, Condemned ditto, 269.

————, by the Rev. G. Hughes, (verbatim copy, by permission)  
382.

————, Rev. Mr. Seaman's, extracts from, 390.

————, Rev. C. Hyatt's, 394.

————, Rev. Samuel Pigott's, of Dunstable, allusion to, 395.

*Witnesses for the Prosecution*—

*Marten, Ann*, the elder, 132, 194, 197.

————, *Thomas*, 141, 154, 198.

————, *Ann*, the younger, 143, 196.

————, *George*, 144.

————, *William*, 147, 148.

*Stow, Phæbe*, 145.

————, *Thomas*, 148.



Burke, Richard, 174.  
Towns, William, 149.  
Pryke, William, 150.  
Matthews, P., Esq., 157, 161, 194, 198.  
Lea, James, 162, 166.  
Offord, Robert, 166, 167.  
Gardner, George, 167.  
Baalham, John, 168, 186, 191, 194, 198.  
Harcourt, Henry, 168.  
Akers, Thomas, 169.  
Lawton, John, 170, 193, 194.  
Chaplin, William, 153.  
——— Henry, Robert, 191.  
Nairn, J. C. 186, 187.

*Witnesses for the Defence.*—

Goodwin, William, 224.  
———, Mary Ann, 225.  
Hardy, Thomas, 226.  
Baalham, Lucy, 226.  
Boreham, Jeremiah, 227  
Living, Edward, 226.  
Havers, Theresa, 227.  
Bugg, John, 227.  
Kersey, Mary, 227.  
Pryke, John, 227

THE END.

---

LONDON:

Printed by W. CLOWES, Stamford-street,













